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Judith Kazantzis

The Country Walk

LEGS PLUNGED DEEP in mud, the dog gives a short hoarse bark. The master, the man, turns impatiently: "Get out of it." The retriever's white and grey coat is sopping, rain tracks through the long curly hairs in jungle channels, ducktailing this way and that over the sinews. The retriever pulls up his left front paw, then with a judder hoists his hind legs out of the sucking mud, and jumps to a drier patch by the gatepost. He creeps round it.

The bullocks walk this way, out in the morning; which seems far off, in this rainy pearly dusk, yet is not so far behind, since winter makes the days shadows of their summer selves—hardly up out of bed, then into electric light and supper. There his wife is, the man imagines her, a small high-up figure in the corner of his eye, at the villa on the hill, surrounded by Victorian pines and preparing a little high tea. The kitchen is clean and she chops onions on a small wooden platter: the slices roll off, moist and ringed. Then mushrooms: she sniffs one, and chops, the knife cleaves the flesh, breaks up the mushroom into sections for frying. He sees, contented, how she sets the china on the table, the two teacups each with a gilded rim and flowers, roses, pansies. The soufflé dish has a painting of plums, at present in the oven. She views it through the shining glass aperture, but the soufflé's nowhere near rising. When it's ready, he will come back.

The herd's already gone back for the night. As he started out, he saw them go slowly up the side of the hill in the familiar direction of the farm, one by one. The narrow bank of the stream is worn into a quagmire, but the man likes to go this way, always goes this way round. The dog, having navigated the morass at the gate, leaps forward from tussock to tussock, tail flagging. Its feathery legs are already sleeked thin and black. The master can see it jumping in the field ahead, a solid silhouette, for the light's going. "Come here, come here, wait, you!" None of this land belongs to the man, who comes from the villa; but to the local farmer. The farmer has sheep for the winter, back in the home fields by the farm, in a dip under the ridge. Taciturn, he has not so far minded the man taking the dog round the farm, where the bullocks are generally.

But now, starting out across the home fields, the master must put the young retriever on a lead; to stop it darting after the flock.

So the master shouts at the dog with a lot of irritation: that playing catch-as-catch-can with the sheep has reflected on his own standing, of which he is silently proud, his obedience to the country code. He'd just got the dog on the lead when the farmer emerged and from the heights of his tractor commented, "That's right, keep him on the lead, don't want sheep-chasers round here", and trundled on home. Which slightly nettled the master, what with the trouble of having to whistle and run after and fail to lay hands on and finally catch the frolicking dog, who thought it a heap of fun.

Anyway, the lower fields are quite empty and the dog can annoy only rabbits, voles and shrews; all highly unlikely. It hunts, plastered, reptilian, not catching a thing, its red tongue arranged to the left over the black-skinned jaws, and gazing back at him under wizened eyebrows, the lower lids falling down so that it looks forever old, wistful and hopeful.

It knows the way. Skinny winter rays, the sun was barely out at midday; a thawing blueness takes hold of the countless grey limbs, the jointed oaks, with their thumping bodies rising from mud and ponds, their roots holding the floor of fading to darkness spinneys. Pools lie in

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each of these little woods, and are iced over in late winter, just as ice will crystallise the mud clods kneaded continuously along the bank.

THE MASTER picks his way through the gate entrance. He does not allow a speck above gumboot level, that is to say, mid-calf. His mackintosh is buff-coloured and fits him smartly and is belted, and he has buttoned one lapel across the other. The rainy wind freshens him and his well-shaven cheeks grow a little pink. His large eyes and well-made mouth in that fresh white complexion, white skin that clothes him and is never marred by coarse sun in this climate, this gentle rainy territory—if his cheeks were not now a bit too plump from too many excellent healthy suppers, anyone would say he was still a very good-looking man, with those shining naive eyes that ask for attention and approval. Despite the plump jowl, and the care with which the man sets his immaculate check cloth cap with the button buttoned down on the rim, sets it on his neat back and sides—to cover a rather balding pate, for the high almost unlined forehead now runs back and up and back and up—nevertheless his eyes bring to mind his white skin, so carefully hidden in clothes that might smell of lavender; skin preserved startling white.

Now he looks round quietly. Jays screech in the border copses. He walks away from the gate across the short grass. The mild slopes curve before him. His heart lifts, and so he lifts his head and breathes the twilight. An expansive feeling fills his chest and this is partly due to increased intake of oxygen, and the thought crosses his mind to run down the slope to the next gate. He sees himself doing it.

The dog runs and noses ahead and the master walks after, enjoying the firm slop of his boots on the grass, the springy curve of the winter globe. He descends into the dell of the next gate surrounded by hazels, elder bushes and stripling oaks, ducking below the simple horizon, thinking of supper. The villa burns lights on the far hill, in its congregation of pines. Rain heavily dapples the buff shoulders of the master; the retriever wouldn't notice rain. The wife hopes her husband won't be too long, as she hears the drain begin to splash outside the kitchen window. Through the clean black oven glass she meditates on her up and coming soufflé.

Dreamily he plods towards the ark of mud: that is to say, the next gate, where the bullocks sometimes have to be slapped aside, as they like to crowd here; usually they bounce aside, lowering their blank heads at the running dog. The master pushes aside the farmer's words: the dog will learn, he can control his own livestock just like any farmer. He doesn't need telling—sour old man who thinks he's cock of the hedgerow—does he own the birds, nature, the rain?

At evening by the gate the churned-up circle's empty. Tree sparrows move in the spinney, no blackbirds. The stream comes meandering round, distinct with rainfall; the feeder of the trees that embrace this meadow. After this place the last fields slope upwards back to the ridge. Beyond the tree-tops, the man sees the lights of the villa twinkle on high, and car lights moving along the main road, lying up beyond. He is puzzled, then put out. No gate. He stands for a moment, then thinks he must look a fool staring at vegetation through barbed wire like a bullock. He plods further along the fence, up the beaten path they have made, reaches the far corner, no gate. It's getting dark, the sky's one low cloud, turning blue, no night for an early moon. In the wood the drip of leaves has a limping beat. The man, whose habit has been broken, walks back again, downhill to the mud. The gate has, he supposes vaguely, been removed and the wire extended, to make the field a dead end; for some economic, or probably uneconomic, purpose.

HE TURNS, whistling for his shadowy dog. They'll have to go back all the way round, which means the sheep, and the business with the lead. He's a bit tired, and definitely put out, tilts his cap down. He turns, and over the curl of the hill comes the farmer, who carries his gun cradled on his bent arm, and the man listens to him shout from high up: "That bloody beast of yours!" as he raises the gun and takes aim from the top of the rise. The dog sits like a big black lizard, puffing and grinning straight back, his tongue dropping sideways like an idiot.

Then the dog falls sideways, into the undergrowth of the hedgerow. "It's your turn next", comes the shout to the man's ears; thick and blurred. He sees the farmer's shape begin to run and labour down from the crest of the hill. The big body and the narrow gun held up straight change from a black silhouette to a shadow, bulky, uncertain, as it melts away from the sky-

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line. The man strains for the complex shadow. It's difficult, velvet, fades from patch to patch. "Got you now", again the shout. The man hears how the voice wheezes slightly, is juiced with pleasure. So then he turns round, sharp, on his heel. He judges the barbed wire—there are four strands. Then he goes down between the third and fourth; but in fear and humiliation remains stuck, crouching, sharply sandwiched between the lower strand which has grasped his trouser-leg and the upper which he can feel in his raincoat, raising it like hairs along a back. The pursuer must slip behind him, such a silent big old man. Something slams into a thin tree trunk to the right. The trunk has to bend like a dancer; then stir back into place.

The frightened man takes off his leather gloves and tries hurriedly and hastily to free himself with bare hands, instructing himself: this is just barbed wire, just barbed wire. But his thighs hurt from the jackknife position and he isn't able to bring his head up for fear of catching either his cap or the skin of his head itself.

Slowly his heart ceases to race. Yet running riot like this! Ridiculous. Childish. What reason for this charade? And slowly he glances about. "Idiot dog", the retriever couldn't care less about its master's efforts, and races round inside the bushes. Two, three perhaps, pheasants squeal out of the undergrowth and pelt off trying to get up into the air through the leaves. The thin trees stir back.

At last the man is free, but with a tearing noise. He straightens up and twists his hand behind his back, it feels the raw edges in the smooth material. He moves slowly down the bank. The retriever is back, kicking up leaves, nosing at blacknesses with unwaning interest and energy. "Come here." The master feels his way down through crumbly earth to the stream. He peers up it, then down, but there's no sign of the planks. The damp smell of vegetation, the trickle of water, reminds the man of some scene of his childhood, but he has no real recall. But to have played such a fool! He should certainly retrace his path. He could still do that. But there is the barbed wire pressing on his back, and the coat shredding, and the tweaking of his check cap by small impersonal iron points as if he was a sheep, leaving its twist of dirty wool. He never likes to go back, for he takes a pride in making the course his own. And then the black field, that raised its unforeseeable crest. Irrelevant.

So, while amazed at the tricks that eyes can play in the dusk, for certainly tomorrow, or next week, the bridge, even the gate, will be there, polite and accommodating, 20 or 25 yards to the right or to the left, downstream or upstream, still the man searches around for a way to cross the present bridgeless and dark little gulf, hidden in its shawl of leaves and its casing of hard branches. His right foot goes into a hole, but he pulls it out with a suck on the boot, and gropes through snarled brambles that pinch and prick at his coat, and with tiny fierce serrations comb his cheek as he bends lower. He knocks up against a confused mass; and patiently standing, he waits till he can sort it out: an old broken-off trunk wedged across the water. He checks his gloves are in his pocket, then feels the split bark; it's rough, a bit of diseased elm he guesses. He feels the linen folds of the interior wood and imagines them white by day, yet here and now wrapped like silver in black velvet. He crumbles an edge. His eyes acclimatise and see how the trunk stumbles across the water, which keeps sidling round and in between and under the irregular arches of its boughs, subsided, wet, stiff, all angles. He pulls himself up on to the elm trunk, breaking off little branches, and the water seems fast, a few inches below his feet, pushing at the line of the elm.

It's a bit of a balancing act, and his hands have got dusty and wet. He sidesteps along, feeling with thick rubber soles. Something picks at the man's cap and he throws a hand up, and slips. He half-sits on the rotting elm, with one leg up to the knee in the stream and the other awkwardly under him. Ruthlessly the stream fills up his gumboot. The man's heart is beating fast, he again notices, and he does not appreciate that. He sits and dangles his leg and lets the stream pour in, and looks up, gazes up at the nameless night between the trees. He feels silent. The wood beats its own way. It is empty, empty of the carriers of guns; of animals that worry and are worried. The wood contains only him, for as long as he cares to sit there. It has spoiled his clothes but offers him new ones if he can take them: a seamless sheath for his white, gleaming body. He waits a little longer.

HE RESUMES. The boot has to be emptied and restored, the cap reset, gloves unearthed, the coat shaken a little to get the damp out

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which is settling up his backside the longer he sits on such a perch. The moulding smell of the tree follows him out of the stream, and he jumps to the other little bank, starts up through leaves half slithery mould. "Here boy." He whistles, having forgotten the dog since he started across the stream. There is a whine, the retriever stretches its front paws, facing him across the brook. It supplicates. "C'mon, c'mon, up here boy", he slaps his hand on the elm trunk, his end, but the dog whines and stays put.

"Well, how're you going to get home then?" the man talks softly across the stream. Not wishing to recross and drag his dog, to bruise its delicate paws on the scored bark and irruptions of twigs. So stands at a loss. His dog bounds sideways and back, crumpling the prickly undergrowth without apparent pain, splaying its fore-paws as if in play, in the well-like blue and brown and black of the little ravine. Then scuttles into the water and is across, spraying its master; who finds this unimportant, in his already total wetness; and leans to touch the dog's sturdy shoulder. It shivers and shakes dry.

Both are up the bank, through drier undergrowth. The trees thin out, thin as arms, black, with brush-heads. The man this time grasps the bole of a small beech, where the second fence uses it as a staging post, inserts his boot in a cleft, tramples the other on to the top strand of the wire and is, stiffly, over. The dog of course is haring up the field in the direction of home.

"I'll come back and get it tomorrow." The well-kept cloth cap has been plucked off in mid-jump, and now sails on a twig; but the man gives it a look. He leaves the wood. And walks home, drenched.

The wife hears movements and the fumbling door knob. Her husband pushes open the green back door that gives on to the cheerful kitchen. He shivers, claps his sopping sticky leather gloves together, sits down on the kitchen chair. "Where did you get to, dear?" He sits with his legs in dirty trousers straight out. She kneels, and with a newspaper draws off the gumboots coated with mud. "Really, you should have left them in the porch." Their soles carry the bloated substance of the wood: gluey mud, little stones, mashed leaves, twigs and dung.

She washes her hands, then goes to the oven, peers in. "I've made a soufflé today." "I can smell it—it smells wonderful", he murmurs. They speak gently. "But it's fallen, it's overdone." "I'm sure it'll taste just as good." She takes up the oven-gloves, chatting: "I saw old Atkins going home on his tractor. Tough old boy, isn't he. They work all hours, don't they." "Hrrm", says her husband.

Then, she's quite startled. "Oh . . . your coat." She catches sight of the rip, amidst the earth spattered from neat buff shoulder to hem. "What will you wear tomorrow . . . up to town? And your cap, that'll take drying." His face is damp, he feels the raindrops before his eyes. Backwards and forwards he towels the white skin of his head, satin soft and unused to the elements, that glistens with rain. And he smoothes his short back and sides, and his ears are pink. The dog pushes through the door and circumnavigates the bright tablecloth, sniffing upwards. Kneeling before the oven, the wife hears its clattering claws, it's as black as a newt. "Out!" says the master.

The Flood

"It rained for forty days and nights". . . and so
Out there beyond the high window
It did, in our imaginations, grey-
Brown water rising till the village lay
Submerged in Noah's Flood. The ark was made
In our own yard; long planks of poplar laid
End-on made do for gopher wood; the beasts
Stayed safely vague and credible; south-east,
Near Diss, lay Ararat; on Ashton's roof
Of red, washed tiles, I saw the dove.

John Loveday

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John Wain

At Sea on the River of Prawns

A Visit to Cameroon

My visit to Cameroon began with an event which took place in Rome: a strike of airport personnel, which closed the runway assigned to my Cameroon Airways flight. Amid the usual chaos of conflicting reports, I hung about at Gatwick for twelve hours. An airport is a non-place at the best of times, not so much a location as the intersecting point of an infinite number of trajectories; it has no nationality, no flavour, no time of day or night, no *raison d'être* except to be a place to which people go in the hope of going away again as soon as possible. The effect of twelve hours in this limbo, added to the three-hour journey it had taken me to get there and the sleepless night before that (I had forgotten to take my anti-malaria pills at the right time, so took a great handful of them several days later, which made me feverish during the hours when I should have been storing up some sleep), was to dislocate me from any anchorage in reality—a dislocation which was to remain, had I only known it, for a fortnight.

The flight was cramped and sweaty, my joints ached, the films were interminable and the spaces between them only less so, but finally it was over and we were slanting down towards Douala, Cameroon's big port, the chief commercial and industrial city and, for everything but administration, the country's capital. There was the great snaking river, pushing westward to that estuary where the intrepid Portuguese explorer whose name escapes me had, first of all Europeans, sailed in (just about every part of Africa and Latin America was first sailed into by an intrepid Portuguese; considering that Portugal is such a pleasant country to live in, one wonders why they were in such a sweat to get out of it). There he found so many prawns that he called the place Rio des Cameroẽs, the River of Prawns. I wonder if there are any left now. Certainly there is something the modern world values more than any crustacean: there is oil.

We bounced down, it was early morning, the doors opened and the hot, wet air wrapped itself round one's face and body like a barber's towel. (That image is for my own generation, those who remember when barbers did something called "shave-and-hot towels", and very good it was.) I walked towards the terminal building and it was like every other terminal building I had ever seen. I looked round at the landscape. It was green and flat, with nondescript trees. Nobody much was stirring.

The airport was clean, cool, spacious. Everyone moved quietly. I had my first taste of the slow, inflexible dignity of the people of this part of the world. The luggage arrived, after the usual long wait, at the carousel. A citizen in an elegant coloured shirt and grey trousers asked me where I had come from. I told him, and he asked me where I was going to. I said, "Yaoundé." He waited beside me silently till my case bumped into sight, took it, and indicated that I should accompany him. I had no idea whether he was a porter, a fellow-voyager, or the manager of the airport. We walked perhaps twenty-five yards. My case was not at all heavy and I could easily have carried it myself, but was afraid it might be a breach of etiquette to do so; besides, I could not shake off the sense of being in a dream.

He took my case over to the desk where it had to be checked in for the flight to Yaoundé, the capital city, a local flight which would take perhaps forty-five minutes. Returning without haste, he told me that the plane was leaving at once, and I must go down to the departure lounge. As he did so he stood before me in the immobile but watchful stance of a person who expects to be paid for a service rendered. I had no Cameroon money. I had no money at all except a £1 note and a £10 note. I offered him the £1 note, which seemed to me quite adequate for carrying one case twenty-five yards and making one enquiry. He seemed unwilling to accept it. I explained, in French, that I had only this or a note for *dix livres*, expecting it to be clear that this made it inevitable for me to offer him the note for *un livre*. He said, gravely and calmly, "*Vous me donnerez la note de dix livres.*" I said, "*Absolument pas.*" He then turned and walked gravely away.

I took my case down to the departure lounge. There was no sign of the imminent departure of which he had spoken. A few people were sitting

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listlessly about. I sank on to a bench. The citizen in the coloured shirt and grey trousers appeared again and held out to me a crumpled French banknote; I could not see its denomination. "*Ça, c'est la moitié de dix livres*", he explained with that calm seriousness. I understood that he considered five pounds a fair remuneration for what he had done. I again refused, and offered him the £1. This time he accepted it, with no show of emotion, and loped noiselessly away. I settled down for the long wait till boarding-time.

That anecdote, which I agree is utterly trivial, is worth telling at the beginning because it will save us time later. It sums up the dealings I had with so many citizens of Cameroon. I was a foreign visitor, and foreign visitors are there to be fleeced; sometimes they succeeded in fleecing me and sometimes they failed, but their way of going about it, and their reaction to success or failure, was always exactly the same: calm, dignified, unhurried. Nobody was strident, or insistent, or wheedling; for that matter, nobody looked particularly needy. I saw no one in rags, no one who looked skeletal; not even (in that climate!) anybody going barefoot, except children, and one or two people out in the country, who were probably going barefoot from choice.

THAT WAS Stage One in my introduction to Cameroon. Stage Two was the arrival at Yaoundé. Here, the airport was much smaller, hardly more than a cluster of one-storey buildings that might be the premises of a provincial flying club. The morning was creeping on towards about ten; the thick, steamy heat weighed down from the sky and shimmered up from the earth. I dragged myself into the waiting-room. There was a sign that said "CHANGE", something I urgently needed, since I was beginning to suffer from that sense of helplessness that comes from being penniless in a strange country; but there was nobody behind the window of "CHANGE", and in fact nobody behind any window. A few people sat about with the same listlessness I had seen at Douala, as if they did not expect anything to happen. Two soldiers, strapped up with huge revolvers, talked to one another. Parked cars glistened in the dead heat. I looked about; I had been told I should be met. I sat down. I stood up again. I walked about. I went to the men's lavatory—that is, I got as far as the door, and decided hastily to postpone all business of that kind until I reached my hotel, if I ever did. Was there really an hotel? Had I an identity, a name even? Did anyone know I was there? Was there any reason why anyone should know, or care, that I was there? Why—to come right down to it—why in God's name *was* I there?

If, at that particular moment, I had tried to answer that question, I should have got it wrong. I was wearing my journalist's hat, responding to an official invitation from the Cameroon Government to come and participate in, and describe for the world outside, the "celebrations." As for what was being celebrated, I vaguely supposed it was "Independence." That, surely, is what all ex-colonial countries celebrate. I knew that Cameroon, having been exploited by the British throughout the 19th century, had been formally annexed by the Germans as a colony—an area not quite corresponding to modern Cameroon was, for the brief period, the pride of Bismarck's Empire—and had then been wrested away by the combined British and French during the First World War, since when it had been under Anglo-French control. After 1961 it no longer was under that control, so (I naturally assumed) these were the celebrations to mark the something-or-other anniversary of self-government.

I was wrong. Self-government itself had receded into the past and ceased to be much of a landmark. These celebrations were political in nature—relating, that is, to internal politics rather than to Cameroon's position in the world community of nations. East Cameroon, the French-speaking part, is about 80% of the country. The remaining 20% is English-speaking West Cameroon. They have slightly different histories; West Cameroon even opted, for a few years, to leave and be part of Ghana, but in 1961 opted in again. A Federal Republic was set up, but those with the firmest grip on the levers of power never saw this as more than a transitional stage, and in 1972 a new Constitution was voted in by referendum and the country became a unitary state, The United Republic of Cameroon. (Everybody in Europe still refers to the country as "the Cameroons", but this habit will die out in time.) The President, H. E. Ahmadou Ahidjo, worked through the dominant Francophone political party, the *Union nationale camerounaise*. Its only significant rival, the *Union des populations de Cameroun*, lost ground steadily and formally ceased to exist in 1972.

I had been invited, then, to help celebrate not independence but the victory of one group of politicians over another group, the ending of one political system and the establishing of another. Whether these things were worthy to be celebrated, I had no idea and, within the resources at my disposal, no means of forming an idea. It had happened, and was to be celebrated, and I was there to see the celebrations. The Ministry of Information and Culture in Yaoundé had asked ENCOUNTER to send someone to write about the event, and ENCOUNTER passed the invitation on to me. (They must have asked a lot of other papers and magazines as well, but ENCOUNTER seems to have been the only one to accept, on a simple, no-strings basis.)

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My position was therefore an isolated one, peculiar to myself. I was, of course, not the only foreign observer to be covering the celebrations. A fair number of French newspapers sent reporters who stayed three or four days, and the BBC sent an indefatigable lady from the African Service who recorded interviews with a great many singers, dancers, and artists generally—for the official day of celebration was preceded by a Cultural Week. But I was the only person not sent there by some outside organisation but invited by the Cameroon Government and hence entirely at their biddance. This explains the isolation and helplessness of my position. I had no funds, no mandate to go here or there, no contacts, just the official invitation. Where they chose to take me, I went, and nowhere else.

ON THAT STEAMY Sunday morning, waiting in the dead airport lounge for somebody to recognise me and do something about me, I had not quite grasped all this. All I knew was that I was an official visitor, was tired, dirty, thirsty and had no currency. The time crawled by. Finally I wandered about until I found some kind of office; knocked; went in; confronted a man who was some kind of official. Debate and consultation ensued. Then it was as if a magic wand had been waved. A soldier escorted me to another part of the airport, perhaps a part reserved for officialdom. Here, in contrast to the death-like atmosphere in which I had been waiting, all was boiling with activity. An air-liner had just touched down with a high-powered delegation from China. Everywhere, African officials in perfectly-cut suits and stiff white collars were greeting smiling, brush-haired Chinese in their high-buttoned blue uniforms. One of the officials had his attention directed towards me, consulted a list, and said with a slight air of reproach, "You were expected yesterday." I began to tell him about the strike in Rome and the twelve hours' delay, but he clearly had no time to spare at the moment for the trivial details of my voyage. It did not matter; the entire party were off, in a motorcade, and I was with them. Soon I was installed in a large modern hotel perched on a hill about five miles out of the town. With a genial invitation to order anything I wanted at any time, and sign any bills that were presented, the official left me to myself.

This being left to myself was, as it turned out, a conspicuous feature of my fortnight in Cameroon. Since the hotel was too far away from the town to walk there, and since it was too hot and oppressive to walk anywhere else (I once tried to "go for a walk" on the hillside, but collapsed in a pool of sweat after a hundred yards and never tried again), I spent great stretches of time in something resembling house-arrest. The telephone system was virtually non-existent, and if it had been working I had nobody to ring up. On days when my official driver did not come for me I had no means of even buying a newspaper. Never since childhood, and possibly not even then, have I known such long stretches of enforced idleness. Of course I could have sat in my hotel room and started a novel or poem, but I didn't. The climate enervated me, and in any case I had a sense of guilt; I felt I ought to be finding out about the country I was in, not giving my mind to personal activities of my own. What I actually did was hang about the hotel.

This proved to be of limited interest. The other guests were nearly all French businessmen—perfectly decent men, I am sure, heavily engrossed in their own world and impossible for me to get to know. In any case, it was often difficult to hear oneself speak. The hotel, in honour of the national celebrations, was being rebuilt and modernised. In a desperate effort to have it all ready for the final Great Day, work went on round the clock. Gangs of workmen, African and French, swarmed on the staircases and corridors, calling instructions to one another. The racket of drilling and hammering filled every space. Clouds of dust hung in the air. The telephones in the rooms had been taken out, and to make a call one had to go to a small improvised office, usually crowded to the doors, where two girls sat at a switchboard. And very coolly efficient girls they were; but it was still a fearsome business to try to make a call.

CAMEROON IS, in fact, a most interesting and varied country. I could tell this from photographs. It is small for an African country—about twice the size of Britain—but it has virtually every kind of African terrain, except pure desert, somewhere within its borders. It has forest, mountains, a coastline where there are wonderful black beaches of basaltic sand. It has at least one town where there are enchanting survivals of 19th-century German colonial architecture. It has this, it has that, and here I was stuck for a fortnight in this accursed hotel. Not that the hotel was to blame—food and service were excellent and the staff good-humoured—but when I was stuck there for periods of a day, a day-and-a-half, two days, it began to seem like a gilded prison.

Under circumstances like these, one summons one's philosophy and makes the best use of what is possible. See Cameroon I did not. Meet anything like a cross-section of Cameroonian citizens I did not. I saw one city, Yaoundé; I saw "the celebrations"; and I became acquainted with—indeed, affectionately attached to—one Cameroonian citizen: Monsieur Léon.

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To recall my first meeting with Monsieur Léon takes me back to that steamy, swampy Sunday morning at Yaoundé airport. He was a chauffeur in government employ, and he was in fact the driver of the car in which I found myself as part of the Chinese cortège. All I took in about him at that moment was that he was a slightly built man of medium height (which meant that among the tall Cameroonians he appeared rather small, with an expressive, thoughtful face) and that he wore a hat of unusual design. I had seen such hats before, but only in Canada. It was made of some kind of mackintosh material, and had a peak in front which went up into a fold encircling the hat itself. It had a vague air of Robin Hood, rather unsuitable for his mild and reflective face. He may have thought that, since the job did not carry a uniform, he should wear a hat that looked in some way formal and professional.

Whether because he happened to be there at that moment or as part of some pre-arrangement, Monsieur Léon, as he bade me call him, was assigned to me as my official driver. (He called me Monsieur Jean.) If I had to go anywhere, he came and took me. Conversely, if he did not come, I went nowhere. Since there was no telephone number at which I could reach him, I was entirely in his hands. In between visits he simply disappeared.

We drove into town with the Chinese delegation. That day and the next were very much Chinese days. The Chinese government had made a handsome present to the people of Yaoundé, in the shape of a vast assembly hall perched on a lump of rock on the outskirts of the city. It was not, for my money, a very elegant building, being in the rather 1930s cinema style favoured by official Communist architecture, but there was no doubt about its size and impressiveness. Marble floors, great sweeping staircases, great folds of curtain sweeping from floor to ceiling, rooms for meetings, rooms for seminars, a concert hall, enormous lobbies and vestibules, and all done in the most lavish style. Chinese architects, engineers, construction workers, had toiled side by side with Africans. The work had been pushed along at such a ferocious pace that something like 40 people had been killed during the months of construction—blown up by the extensive explosions needed to clear the rocky site, run over by lorries, falling from high scaffolding, and in other ways devoured by the Moloch of efficiency. But at last the huge monument was ready. On my first morning I attended the official opening, listened to the speeches, made one among the excited crowd who surged in eager to be the first, except officials and construction workers, to enter the building.

This was the first occasion, though not the last, on which I heard a speech by the President of Cameroon, H. E. Ahmadou Ahidjo. A Muslim from the north of the country, wearing always the simple white robe and fez that proclaimed his religion, he stood out from the gorgeous throng about him by the plainness of his dress. The governing class of Cameroon, probably like that of every black African country, tends to dress for public appearances either in extremely formal European dress or magnificent traditional robes. Their clothes, like the supple body movements of people in the streets and like the incessant drumming one hears everywhere—at any gathering of more than a dozen people, there is always at least one playing on a drum—seem to emphasise that free-flowing exuberance that comes naturally to the African. The President, by contrast, though his smile is genial and his public image benign, carries with him an air of the stern discipline, the simplicity and rigour, that is the mark of Islam.

The opening ceremony happened in the spacious forecourt of the building. The flags waved, the band played, a special unit of the Cameroon army paraded in ceremonial uniform evidently modelled on that of the French army (they looked more or less like *zouaves*, or like my idea of *zouaves*), and one after another the top people stepped to the microphone and made their polite, congratulatory speeches, full of phrases like "*une certaine fierté légitime*." The expected denunciation of South Africa was duly inserted.[1] The leaders of the Chinese delegation were invested by President Ahidjo with whatever is the Cameroonian equivalent of the *Légion d'Honneur*, several of only slightly less importance were invested with something only slightly less grand, and the band played again, European martial music which blended strangely with the inevitable polyrhythmic drumming that came from several points on the fringes of the crowd; and we broke up and surged into the building.

Not only was I part of this first wave of sightseers, I was also one of the audience for the first event to be held in the new *Palais*, for it was inaugurated that evening with *une soirée culturelle*. Cameroon provided dancers and musicians, including Manu Dibango, the only Cameroonian musician with a world reputation; and the Chinese, for their part, put on a demonstration of gymnastics by their Railway Workers' Gymnastic Club. These people had certainly made effective use of such leisure time as their railway duties allowed them, for more highly trained and more skilful acrobats it would be hard to imagine. They

[1] Do not misunderstand me. The South Africans have a certain amount of right on their side, in their general stance in international politics, but their treatment of their black population is revolting; I know because I have been there and seen it; and, however embarrassing it may be to find oneself agreeing with self-righteous trendy liberals, the fact remains that as long as the South Africans keep up this treatment they will be hated by the black African nations, and very understandably.

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were neat little fellows like incredibly agile rubber dolls, and they bounced and balanced and flipped about and defied gravity in every conceivable manner, each turn ending with a smile and a bow to the audience who responded with thunderous applause. I enjoyed the show, but it is, I suppose, a limitation in me that the sense of amazement I feel at achievements like gymnastics, pole-vaulting or ski-jumping wears off quickly; initially I am astounded that human beings can do these things, but I become attuned and even *blasé*. So, after watching fifteen persons clamber on to a small shining bicycle and circle round and round the stage, I ceased to take much interest in whether another half-dozen could be added by hand-to-hand balancing or swinging from clenched teeth.

However, from the point of view of an evening's entertainment, the acrobats made an excellent contrast with the African side of the proceedings, which was all colour and sinuous movement and exuberance. (Some of the dancing, though perfectly within the bounds of conventional decency, was the most erotic I have ever seen.) African physicality is totally different from Chinese; precision and discipline seem less important to them than natural grace and (to use the word again, for there is no other) exuberance. This was all brought out marvellously in the closing scene. A wonderful woman singer, highly charged with energy, came down from the stage, trailing microphone in hand, and sang the last number from the floor; as she did so everyone who had taken part came onstage and stood smiling and waving to the audience. The African performers, tall and supple and gorgeously dressed, swayed to the music like a field of ripe corn; no one had told them to do it, they did it because they could not help it; the Chinese stood perfectly still, a cluster of neat little smiling dolls.

WHAT I WAS witnessing, of course, both in the morning and the evening, was a concrete demonstration of that heavier and heavier investment in Africa from which the Chinese obviously expect great things. The Russian initiative must now be held to have failed, and they have largely withdrawn it and put their eggs instead in the Latin American basket; into the space left vacant, the Chinese have stepped as "the natural leaders of the Third World." All this is predictable, and perhaps natural. What I saw that day left me with no bad taste in the mouth; though it would be interesting to know whether the Chinese, as well as expensive gestures of visible propaganda like this spanking new building, are putting much into medical and relief work; whether, as well as getting in with a relatively sleek and prosperous place like Cameroon, they are doing much to help those African countries which are starving and disease-ridden. It could be that they are.

Sleek and prosperous, by African standards, the Cameroonians certainly are. Their standing with organisations like the World Bank is, I am informed, very high; they invest their money cautiously and shrewdly. The oil revenue, for instance, is not being allowed to transform the country too rapidly in a wild bonanza of expansion. Oil is a finite resource; when the day comes on which the pumps run dry, the Cameroonians want to have something tangible to show for the years of profit; so the oil money is being channelled into agriculture. Cameroon is not poor now, and does not look like being poor at any time in the foreseeable future, which is an unusual thing to be able to say of any black African country.

MEANWHILE, my own struggle went on. The low point of depression, the nadir of my crippling sense of isolation, came on the first Friday morning. I was slated to attend some public function—the opening of a new *Lycée* for the study of *Postes et Télécommunications*, I think it was—and, without much positive appetite for the event, I was nevertheless looking forward to a few hours out and about, with a chance of meeting some new people. I put on my go-to-meeting clothes (I was always very careful about this, never appearing in public without a jacket and tie) and waited by the front entrance of the hotel for Monsieur Léon. He did not come. I stood, I sat, I strolled about, the minutes crawled by in that thick, stifling air, and finally I had to admit to myself that he wasn't just late, he was not coming. As usual there was no number I could ring, no means of throwing a line to the outside world. It was another day and another night in the hotel for me. There were, indeed, a few taxis drawn up in the car park, but I had learnt to avoid them, for in their usual bland and dignified Cameroonian way the operators were as predatory as taxi-drivers generally are when confronted with the inexperienced and helpless tourist who simply has to get somewhere. A few days earlier I had had to go to the office of Cameroon Airlines to see about my return ticket (a telephone message had summoned me there, naming the official I was to meet, but of course when I arrived at the stated time the man was not in the building); and one of these citizens had charged me the equivalent of £8 for the short trip into town and back, a rate which would soon drain my emergency fund down to nothing.

So I spent Friday in and around the hotel, mostly sitting and trying to read under the trees near the swimming-pool. There were a number of women I was beginning to recognise, the wives, I suppose, of the French businessmen, who spent the whole of every day beside this pool; I began to marvel at their ability to do absolutely nothing for

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eight hours, day after day, except lie there, occasionally chatting a little or issuing a directive to one of the children who lolloped around the pool, and now and then applying a fresh coat of sun-tan lotion. To be fair, they had, as I had not, the prospect of having something to do in the evening, when they made conversation to their husbands and perhaps to business associates.

The day inched by; I was reading Lady Charlotte Guest's beautiful Victorian translation of the *Mabinogion*, a book I had always meant to read and had finally caught up with in the library of the invaluable British Council in Yaoundé.[2] It may seem a bizarre cultural mixture, to sit on a hillside in equatorial Africa reading these strange, mystical Celtic folk-tales, full of giants and enchanters and chivalrous knights wandering in dark forests, all wreathed in the mist and sea-spray of the rocky western fastnesses of Europe. But I did not feel it as strange; for, after all, was I not myself under a strange enchantment, was not the hotel the castle of a giant who, without using swords or chains but every bit as resistlessly, held me captive on a green mountain surrounded by unknown perils? Was I not languishing and hoping for rescue?

Even so, when I got up on the Saturday morning the thought of another day spent reading, without exchanging a word with anyone save the waiters from whom I ordered my food, was daunting. I went out after breakfast into the hotel grounds, I took my accustomed chair under a tree that seemed to be permanently crowded with small, golden, linnet-like birds (were they the souls of previous captives who had sighed away their lives by this same pool?), and I opened the *Mabinogion*. Then, some supremely fortunate impulse made me decide I needed something from my room. Sunglasses? a handkerchief? I have forgotten. But I went in, through the milling crowds of workmen and the heavy hanging dust, took the lift up to my landing, and there, standing outside my door in a listening attitude, having evidently just knocked on it, was Monsieur Léon.

It was a reversal of fortune, a miracle, as sudden as any in the *Mabinogion*. I greeted him as one greets the champion with shining sword who brings rescue from the dungeons of a sorcerer. For his part, his greeting to me was emotional. He poured out his story. When he was supposed to come for me on the previous morning, the car had refused to start; it needed some repair, I forget what, and the garage had been slow. He had been in despair: "*J'ai presque pleuré*", he said, looking at me with those great dark eyes. "*Je me demandais, qu'est-ce que Monsieur Jean en pensera?*" It was a turning-point in our relationship, the moment when I realised that his commitment to me was not just a wish to do his job properly, though of course it was that too; it was a human commitment; he cared what happened to me, he wanted me to get along well in his country.

IMMEDIATELY, though I am sure it was his rest-day, Monsieur Léon suggested we take a trip. Was there anywhere I would like to go? Off the top of my head I produced a name I had heard: the Nachtigal Falls. He assented eagerly, glad that I had a definite wish. In a few minutes we were leaving the city behind, though what we were getting into was not "countryside" in the way we think of it in Europe; what lined the highway was a mixture of dense bush with agriculture on what seemed a kind of medieval strip pattern. I asked Monsieur Léon continual questions about what we could see growing, but in many cases I did not know the French names he gave for the plants and trees, I could not jot them down because I can't write in a moving vehicle, and altogether I am a wash-out and this is the worst article on Africa you have ever read in your life. Little I cared then, or care now. It was a day off, I had a car at my disposal, I had a driver at my disposal, and, what was worth a thousand cars and a million drivers, I had a friend.

The Nachtigal Falls (did the Germans find nightingales?) are not, in themselves, much to look at. The Sanaga River, though fairly large, is (at any rate where I have seen it) no more dramatic than the dull, calm Trent of my nativity. At one point, about 40 miles from Yaoundé, it tumbles mildly over some rocks, making a small amount of foam, and then spreads into a broad reach perhaps 200 yards wide. Not much to see. But I shall remember it, for several reasons.

The first is that one leaves the metalled road about half a mile from the river, after which the wise traveller proceeds on foot. We, however, were not wise travellers. Monsieur Léon had no intention of letting me trudge towards the falls like any peasant. Only the lordly motor car would do, even though the machine was useless. When I saw the deeply rutted track in front of us, I suggested walking. He did not hear me. Lorries churn their way down that totally inadequate path, because the river Sanaga at this point is a source of gravel, and gravel is used in making concrete, and Cameroon's new prosperity demands concrete and more concrete, for roads and buildings. So they churn and spin and lurch, six-wheel giants, juggernauts, wreckers; and the forest track, which has doubtless served perfectly well from time immemorial, has immensely deep ruts which are scooped out in the rainy season and then baked hard in the sun.

I could see this was going to be hopeless, but I

[2] What a life-saver that institution is, to those of us who find ourselves washed up, disoriented and nonplussed, in foreign cities! And that is quite apart from all the other things they do, the things Whitehall grudgingly allows them some money for.

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could also see that Monsieur Léon's pride was involved, and it is not for nothing that our forefathers made Pride the chieftain of the Seven Deadly Sins. Where Pride goes, the human being follows, into whatever catastrophe. We bumped and groaned down this track. Dense vegetation towered on either side; the noon heat was stupefying. I felt a total, releasing sense of resignation. What happened would happen, and I could lay down any burden of decision.

WHAT HAPPENED WAS that we came to a bend where the ruts were totally impassable for any car ever made. I opened my mouth to suggest that we stop and walk the rest of the way, but this vestigial piece of decision-making was too late. Monsieur Léon trampled on the accelerator, we sprang forward like a metallic lion, and with a violent bump and a grinding noise we subsided, at forty-five degrees, completely immobile.

I clambered out—carefully, because my door was at the upper elevation—and stood beside the car. A heavy, drugged silence lay over the landscape. Enormous butterflies, their wings of dark velvet, chocolate and purple, zig-zagged in and out of the patches of sunlight. I felt the immense midday torpor of Africa. I did not care whether we went on, went back, or stayed here for ever. I was not hungry, nor thirsty, nor eager for any kind of action. I had no intellectual curiosity and hardly any emotions. In an instant, I had become a forest-dweller, content to remain for ever within two hundred yards of where I now stood. A tree beside me had fantastically large leaves; idly, I picked one. It would have covered a coffee-table. But I was a million miles away from the world of coffee-tables.

Monsieur Léon walked round the car with deliberation; Cameroonians do everything with deliberation. It was obviously no more use than a mound of scrap-iron. He did not seem worried. He looked about him as if expecting the surrounding forest to provide the answer.

As if called into being by his unspoken wish, a gang of boys appeared; some six or eight in number; big lads, fourteen or fifteen years of age, well-grown. Monsieur Léon explained the situation. The boys understood. Seizing the car, they hoisted it bodily into the air, while he sat in the driving-seat and tip-toed on clutch and accelerator. The car bumped forward to passable ground. I got in.

Two minutes later we reached the shores of the river. We got out and looked about us. The broad, quiet stream flowed through that primeval landscape; surely, I thought, this is what the earth looked like in the time of the dinosaurs. Across by the far bank, the water slopped gently over the rocks; we had seen the Nachtigal Falls. A little way from us, slumbering in the river, was a boat, or the rough semblance of a boat, about twelve feet long. I asked Monsieur Léon what it was. "*C'est une pirogue*", he said. And so, by heaven, it was, a real, traditional, basic dug-out, hollowed from a log. The stern was simply the chopped-off trunk, the bow had been roughly chiselled into a point. Being interested in small river-craft, I went down to the dug-out and examined it.

The boys now arrived on foot. Seeing me curious about the dug-out, their spokesman suggested a trip on the river. Within a moment Monsieur Léon and I were half-sitting, half-leaning against the rim of the contrivance, one of the boys was paddling from the stern with a shovel, another was in the bow poling it along, and we were launched.

Was it a tourist-ploy, something they were accustomed to do to earn pocket-money? I don't think so. For one thing, I don't think many tourists came that way, for another I don't think many of them would choose this form of sight-seeing trip. One's clothes got covered with wet sand; these dug-outs are used to scoop out the fine clean sand from the river-bed and bring it to where lorries can take it away. They are the simplest, most basic kind of working boat, and indeed it would be a waste of effort to build more sophisticated craft if a hollowed-out log will do the job. But they are not made for tourists.

With the pole and the paddle slowly propelling us, we crept out on to the broad, calm river, lined with low dark vegetation. And at that moment I felt I had at last reached black Africa. After all these thousands of miles, all this effort, frustration, and misery, this interminable waiting and fretting, all those pages of the *Mabinogion*, I was at last rewarded with a genuine experience. And what was it? A hollowed log streaked with wet sand, a pair of strong black feet, with widely-spaced toes and pink soles, braced against the sloping prow of the rude craft, a shovel digging at the water, and the patient face of Monsieur Léon looking pleased under his Canadian cap.

Was this worth the whole gigantic effort of getting myself that far? Most certainly it was. I had been brought here by the white man's motor car, driven by a black man who had learnt one of the white man's skills, and even the boat I was floating in was used in the service of modern building techniques. But it was a contact.

WHAT ARE the words that come naturally about black Africa? Timeless, prehistoric, dark, brooding, primeval. I think the word that rises to the top in my mind is "waiting"—not fretting, not waiting impatiently, but waiting with a

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deep, majestic indifference for us and our world to go away. And it doesn't make any difference, of course, that this time we shan't go away. The white man—but "black" and "white" are indifferent here, what I really mean is modern man—is in Africa for his own gain and his own advantage, and where that motive leads him he will worm in deeper and deeper and never let go. He will hang on like a tick, so that if he is pulled off, his head and clenched jaws will remain. He will metamorphose like a liver fluke; but give up, no. The African, who grows like a tree out of his landscape and inhabits it without conflict or haste or strain, accepts the presence of *homo modernus* as he accepts floods and drought and pestilence. He seems to have no particular relationship with this unearthly interloper; he squats on the ground, accepts what the gods send, and lives by his own rhythms. We have managed to cover the whole continent of Africa with a thin, tensile web of our notions and habits and institutions, with airports and motor cars and electronics and factories and even, here and there, roads; but this web lies on the surface and has no relation with what is below. Go down one millimetre and you find black Africa, timeless, changeless, incurious, not wanting to know about us and our ways.

This impression is confirmed by everything the intruder meets with: not only the earth itself, the rocks, the vegetation, the animals, the rivers, but the nature of one's dealings with African humanity. There is, of course, a small top crust which is entirely cosmopolitan and modernised—people who have gone outside Africa for their education, or sat at the feet of those who have gone outside and returned much altered. Below them (if the spatial metaphor is acceptable, as I am not at all sure it is) one finds the middle-range functionaries, those who work as clerks in government departments and business offices, who run post offices and travel agencies. On the surface they, too, have the marks of *homo modernus*, but these marks are skin-deep. In their essential selves they have the African rootedness, the indifference to time, all the things that set them apart from the little bouncing dolls of Chinese whose antics they applauded so generously. Below them again is the populace, everybody but the top 1%, who are as they have always been—black, graceful beings who live their lives vertically rather than horizontally as we do. To the modern person, it is a slavery and a disgrace to be rooted in one locality and never travel out of it: we disperse our energies in rushing laterally from one horizon to the other. The African spends his life in one neighbourhood, not merely because he is materially poor and cannot afford to travel, but because his source of vitality is not from horizon to horizon but straight up and down, from the centre of his own body to the centre of the earth. Cameroon has a hundred tribes, with a hundred languages. If you are born there, you might grow up speaking a language that is unintelligible 30 miles away, but 30 miles, which is as far as you can walk in a day and rather farther if you have to carry a load, will do to live your life in: it provides variety, sustenance, relationships; it is the world in miniature, and if you know it, really know it yard by yard, you know more than a modern person who sits in a metal box with a belt round his waist and canned music pumping into his ears, being hurled along at 50,000 feet.[3]

THE REST OF that day passed in a dream. The sun shone through a boiling mist. The dug-out, having described a wide circle, grounded gently on the gravel of the river-bank. We all got out. I distributed largesse among the boys; they accepted it with that unshakeable stately calm, obviously having expected something, obviously glad to have it, yet not in any way strident, nobody reaching out and snatching, no voice raised in an attempt to wheedle more. It was like a semi-circle of chiefs at some unhurried confabulation (and indeed one of them, I was informed by Monsieur Léon, was the son of the local chief, and looked the part).

We started the drive back along the forest path, with predictable results. Once more we came to the bend and the impossible trough; once more Monsieur Léon charged it headlong, taking on the forces of gravity and equilibrium in a gallant but foredoomed joust; once more the car halted, helpless as an overturned beetle. The boys appeared again, lifted the car and carried it again, I handed out emoluments again, there were more smiles and genial farewells, and we were off, not straight back to the city but free to spend a few hours in the open country, looking at the small farms, stopping to buy this and that. They were selling samples of their produce on trestle tables by the roadside, as farmers do in every country. These pauses enabled Monsieur Léon to chat with the farmers and their wives, and me to look about me and notice the shy, saucer-eyed children who peeped round their parents' legs at this strange sweating visitor. They were barefoot, as was only sensible, but I saw none that looked neglected or ill-nourished.

We stopped and drank bottled beer at a place called, believe it or not, Lunar Park. I asked Monsieur Léon to write down the name of the language I had heard him speaking with the country people, and he wrote down "Yaoundé." I had expected

[3] I am aware, of course, that Africa contains a large number of nomads, who live a wandering life; but since they conduct their wanderings at a natural pace and their migrations are seasonal, they are just as far removed from *homo modernus*.

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him to write "Bamileke", the name of the largest of Cameroonian tribes, whose language must be the dominant African language if there is such a thing; but I was coming to learn that my expectations were seldom relevant. At Lunar Park there were some animals held in cramped cages, all of them from this region. African animals in Northern European zoos have the look of shipwrecked creatures marooned in a totally incomprehensible environment, where they would soon die even if they managed to escape. It was strange to see these animals, within sight and sound of their free kin, held back only by thick mesh from their own forests, their own pools and glades. A large chimpanzee, with a collar and chain round his neck like a dog, accepted a lighted cigarette from Monsieur Léon and smoked it exactly like a human being, inhaling deeply, making me wonder about the morality of fostering nicotine addiction in a creature who has no money and cannot go and buy himself a packet of twenty when he feels like a smoke. Moral problems everywhere!

On the road, every few miles, we overtook or encountered a herd of those humped, wide-horned cattle, patiently hoofing along towards the slaughter-house, each one driven by a straight-backed Muslim in his austere gown and round cap, a wallet at his waist holding his worldly wealth. Monsieur Léon told me that these Muslim herdsmen are nomads from the north of the country, and that they walk their herds down to the cities to be killed. By the time the cattle have shambled so far they are skinny and withered, but apparently the custom is to slaughter them straight away without putting them out to pasture. Now, perhaps because the populace is tiring of this austere fare, the notion has begun to take root that it is better to slaughter the animals on their own ground and bring them south in refrigerated trucks. So, soon there will be no more Muslim drivers with their long staves, the slowly treading beasts, the little vignette linking our world with the world of ten thousand years ago, and instead there will be a few more giant lorries howling along arterial roads. But the meat will be plumper, and perhaps, weight for weight, cheaper.

THE OFFICIAL DAYS dragged by. I went to a Trade Fair, where a river of visitors, black, yellow, and white, flowed through a sequence of prefabricated pavilions whose Cameroonian staff, grandly proud of everything, pointed to the accelerating pace of industry in their country. They can now, I saw for myself, make plastic buckets. Doubtless it is a better proof of sophistication and progress to be able to make nuclear warheads and nerve gas than plastic buckets, but in the general life of the world the plastic bucket is of far more usefulness, while as an offensive weapon it is less dangerous than an earthenware chamber-pot; so I honoured this achievement in my turn, in company with a knot of expressionless Chinamen who looked a little like walking plastic buckets themselves.

Meanwhile, in an effort to break out of my cocoon of isolation, I had established contact with the British Embassy. They received me courteously when I telephoned and dropped in out of the blue with a request for a general briefing on recent Cameroonian history; next, I was invited to an informal reception at which I met the Ambassador, Mr Bryan Sparrow, and his wife. (A lot of things seem to be going wrong in our country, but we still seem to be able to choose excellent diplomats to represent us abroad.) It was a busy week at the Embassy; for once, London had outsmarted Paris in the game of diplomatic relations with ex-colonial countries, for Whitehall had recognised *la semaine culturelle* in Yaoundé by sending the Minister for the Arts, Mr Paul Channon. (The French sent journalists, but we sent a Minister, and the fact was duly taken notice of.) I had several glimpses of Mr Channon, whizzing about, attending receptions and luncheons, visiting this and that, untiring in the long, sticky days, talking away in French, and generally doing his job with an energy that made me feel slightly better about paying taxes.

Then came the social evening. I was to be a guest at a dinner-party at the Ambassador's residence. The prospect of hours of interesting company, after so many days of almost total solitude, was enormously attractive. And the company *would* be interesting; apart from the Ambassador and his wife, and Mr and Mrs Channon, and several members of the Embassy staff, ditto African equivalents, there was Hugh Hudson, director of the successful film *Chariots of Fire*, in Cameroon to set up the filming of a Tarzan epic (yes), and there was Professor Victor Ngo, one of Cameroon's leading surgeons and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Yaoundé. I wanted to be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Bearing in mind that no one in Yaoundé ever seemed to know the way anywhere, I made a special *détour* with Monsieur Léon, the next time we went out, to the British Embassy so that he could question the personnel on duty and find out the exact location of the Ambassador's house. He did so. The guard on duty told us the way in pidgin English, which interested me because it was the first time I had ever heard it spoken, though I gather it is still widespread here. Monsieur Léon listened carefully. All seemed set fair.

The following evening he arrived and we set out, I in high spirits and determined to have a good time. These spirits first began to leak away when I noticed that Monsieur Léon had slowed down

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and seemed to have driven down the same street two or three times. (The streets in Yaoundé do not have names, or at any rate they are not written up like the name of your street and mine.) We stopped and interrogated several citizens who had, apparently, contradictory theories as to where the Ambassador lived. The African night descended suddenly like a velvet curtain. Frogs and cicadas began their chorus. Time was getting on; I had not allowed for any delay, since we had researched the route beforehand. But this research, it appeared, had been inadequate.[4] We drove ever more slowly, stopped ever more frequently. Monsieur Léon's face expressed sorrow and anxiety. We drove up hills, into blind alleys, along dirt roads at the edge of town. Finally Monsieur Léon said we must go to the Embassy and start again. We went to the Embassy. Monsieur Léon asked the guard on duty, a different one this time, to sit beside him and navigate. The man replied, reasonably I thought, that he could not leave his post. A long wrangle ensued. I visualised the guests assembling, the sherry-glasses clinking, the beginning of a blithe flow of conversation.

Then Monsieur Léon said we must go back to the hotel and telephone to find out the address. This meant a minimum of ten miles, there and back, but it seemed inevitable. At the hotel, we had to wait our turn at the switchboard in the tiny makeshift office. Time was going by at an alarming pace. I wondered if they were annoyed with me at the dinner-party. Finally I got through to what I thought was the Ambassador's residence, but turned out to be the home of one of his staff, who obligingly put his chauffeur on the line. With this chauffeur Monsieur Léon conducted a shouted argument at a volume that almost rendered the telephone unnecessary. It was clear to me, as I leaned against the doorpost in dumb misery, that they were getting nowhere. "*Est-ce que je parle chinois?*" demanded Monsieur Léon at one point. Perhaps if he had really spoken Chinese we might have got somewhere.

Abandoning the telephone, Monsieur Léon now suggested that we set out again. I saw no alternative, though I had now given up hope of ever reaching the dinner-party.

Standing in the pool of light outside the hotel entrance we saw, as we emerged, the taxi-driver who had so handsomely overcharged me for my trip to the airline. Since I had philosophically accepted being swindled, I had no grudge against this citizen, a large, broad-shouldered, piratical young fellow. He addressed me, whenever we met, as "*Mon père*", which I chose to regard as pleasant old-fashioned courtesy. On this man Monsieur Léon immediately fastened and began questioning him. He must have said that he did know the way to the British Ambassador's house, because within a moment we were on our way again, this time with the other driver going ahead as a pilot-fish, at my expense, naturally. Down into the city we went again, and into the maze of dirt roads. It transpired, not to my surprise, that the pirate had no idea of the way either. But at least there were three of us in it together, and in any case I was frozen into a paralytic state of indifference. The dinner, I was sure, must have reached the main course by now, and my chair would be empty.

Monsieur Léon had also retreated inside himself. He was silent, and his face reflected the emotions he was feeling at finding himself in this situation. It was more than just the impatience of a man frustrated. It was sadness at letting down Monsieur Jean. He hunched over the wheel like a carved black god of sorrow.

FINALLY, TO CUT SHORT the tale of our miseries, we got to the Ambassador's house, though whether by navigation or sheer chance I shall never know. I almost did not dare ring the doorbell, but the assembled company, after waiting an incredible time for their food, had only just that moment decided to give up on me and were in the very act of trooping into the dining-room. I babbled excuses and apologies. People were kind and gracious. I subsided into my food, and delicious it was. Slowly, the evening came right side up. Dinner over, we moved into a room where Cameroonian musicians played the lilting, subtly rhythmic music of their tradition. Then, as I sat on a sofa making what I hoped was coherent conversation, a fellow-guest approached me with the words, "Mr Wain, your driver has collapsed."

And so indeed he had. This next episode in the saga had already gone some distance before I was apprised of it. Monsieur Léon, it seemed, had been noticed lying on the ground beside his car. Help had been summoned. The Ambassador himself, a humane and kindly man, had lifted Monsieur Léon's unconscious body, with the august assistance of Professor Ngo, into the car of another guest, Antony Steel, secretary of the Anglo-Cameroon Society of London. Clearly the invalid was in the best hands. There was nothing I could do. The car was being driven away even as I sat on that sofa hearing the news.

The matter was briefly discussed before we resumed what for the others was normality. One theory, natural enough among people who had never met him, was that my driver must have been drinking. I knew for an absolute certainty that this was not so. Monsieur Léon, an abstemious and

[4] Perhaps pidgin English is in decline after all; it is on the syllabus of the local University, which is usually the first sign of decline in any subject; modern English literature, for instance, has wilted ever since it was set for examinations.

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conscientious man, would never have gone off to a dram-shop while waiting to take me back to the hotel. I knew exactly what had happened. He had sat in the car, or stood beside it, or paced up and down, a prey to gloom and tension, accusing himself, becoming more and more agitated, until this mass of feelings had found expression in some kind of physical crisis and he had lost consciousness.

THE NEXT MORNING, I woke to the prospect of a life without Monsieur Léon. I made efforts to get some information about him, but these met with the same success as my efforts to get any kind of information on any administrative subject, that is, none at all. I spent the morning, under the grilling sun, standing about in the yard of the governmental depôt which sent out cars and chauffeurs, fixing up to get a new driver; it was all I could do. By the time I was assigned my new driver, a large and affable young man who seemed to look forward to a spell of work as other people look forward to going on holiday, it was nearly twelve. I had an appointment to do something or other but I was so crumpled and sweat-soaked that it was unthinkable to go there without first returning to the hotel for a shower and a clean shirt. My new driver took me there; I asked him to wait, went up to my room, undressed and got under the shower. At that moment there was a knock on the door.

Streaming wet, holding a towel about me, I went to the door and opened it. There stood Monsieur Léon. Joy beamed from his face. I let him in. While I towelled and dressed he poured out his assurances that he was fully recovered, that the previous night he had taken some *comprimés*, that he was fit for duty immediately.

These explanations took some time, and it was in a great hurry that I finished dressing and went down to find my new driver and tell him he would not, after all, be needed. He seemed dashed, but that had to be his problem. My problem, as it turned out after Monsieur Léon and I drove away, was that I had changed my trousers and forgotten, amid all this, to transfer my watch from one pair to the other. It was a pocket watch, of excellent Swiss make, to which I was much attached. I left it, amid all this torrent of events, in the pocket of a pair of trousers on my bed, and when I came back two and a half hours later, it was not there. The loss would not be worth mentioning if it did not shed light on a typical *leitmotif* of African administration. When the Cameroon Embassy in London were buying my ticket and making travel arrangements, I asked if I might have routine insurance, just the kind of sickness-and-loss-of-effects without which no sane person ever travels anywhere. My request was declined. "You are a guest of our government", I was told in tones slightly reproachful, as if it were a slur on that government to suggest that anything could go wrong while I was in its care. When I subsequently mentioned that I had lost my watch, and under what circumstances, and intimated that any contribution towards replacing it would be welcome, that care was blandly withdrawn.

Still, I had Monsieur Léon back. And from now on, the even tenor of our relationship was uninterrupted.

"ALL THIS petty egotism, this endless recital of personal inconveniences, lost watches and delayed dinner-parties; and all the time that mighty heart of black Africa lies unexplored." Querulous reader, I am in fact selecting with extreme rigour. The frustrations and minor disasters of my fortnight in Cameroon would fill volumes; I have not mentioned a tenth part of them. What is more, I have to think of investing this article with some humble usefulness. I am writing, among others, for people like myself, novices, those who know nothing of black Africa, and who might receive, as I received, an unexpected invitation to go there; I want such people to have some idea of what awaits them. Also, the mighty heart of black Africa is difficult enough for a European to fathom even after years of study; most outsiders who go there are like me, making a short stay with one delimited purpose. No doubt the French businessmen in my hotel, or the reporters who flew in for a couple of nights in Yaoundé, would have experiences of the same kind to relate. My only wish is that each and every one of them found a friend as good as Monsieur Léon.

And now, finally, the all-important date has come, Thursday, 20 May, when *La République Unie du Cameroun* is a decade old. In the morning a colossal parade, rehearsals for which have paralysed traffic every morning since I got here; in the early evening a reception at President Ahidjo's resplendent new palace. This in itself is a turning-point; during all the years of his Presidency, he has lived austerely in Yaoundé, refusing to have a palace built for him; now, presumably to mark this final phase of ascendancy, the money and resources have been put to this purpose and the Presidential palace, enormous and imposing, looks across the intervening mile of ground to the *Palais des Congrès*. The reception this evening, for what must be about a thousand guests, is the very first to be held in the new palace, or at any rate the first on this scale. Entering by a gate and showing one's invitation to the security guards, one joined the river of guests mounting slowly a long, terraced approach to the vast building that tops the slope. Going up the steps and entering, I took in the almost unbelievable sumptuousness of the construction, a huge uncompromising symbol of

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political success. If there are still Cameroonians who hanker after the federal system and dislike the United Republic, a building like this is a clear message to them to forget their aspirations and regrets and fall into step. The rights and wrongs of the matter are beyond me. I know of course that when Ahmadou Ahidjo came to power he did not do so by being a Nice Chap. Ten years ago, when guerrilla resistance was finally quashed, there were a number of public executions. . . . On the other hand, an execution is an execution, public or private, and if I were going to be executed I might very well choose to have it done in public, where the assembled populace could at least see that it was carried out reasonably quickly and cleanly. We live at a time when about three-quarters of the globe is ruled by political parties that make a capital crime out of any attempt to unseat them, and even in the tiny area of civilisation, one need only go back a couple of hundred years to hear the tumbrils rolling through the streets of Paris or hear the clank of chains as radical agitators in England are led away to the hulks. So whatever harsh decisions Ahmadou Ahidjo has made, he has behaved no worse than most rulers have behaved most of the time, and for that matter most still do. I did not feel, as I reflectively gnawed on a chicken-leg on the terrace of this colossal edifice, that I was participating in a scene of barbaric splendour, based on cruelty, like one of Stalin's Kremlin banquets. Ahidjo is tough, but he is not an Idi Amin, nor (to come more closely into the sphere of his thinking) an Ayatollah Khomeini. As these thoughts passed through my mind, I felt a rustle, a stir of excitement, in the crowd standing about me; I turned, just in time to see President Ahidjo, his wife beside him, walk smiling by. He was no more than six feet from me; if I had been a maniac bent on attacking him, this was my moment, and nobody could have prevented it; the guards at the gate had not searched us for weapons. So Ahidjo must feel more or less secure in the middle of a large crowd, both of his own people and of foreigners, which is in itself not a bad sign.

AND THAT WAS the end, or very nearly the end, of my Cameroonian adventure; not that it was anything very remarkable in the way of an adventure (No, I am not Laurens van der Post, nor was meant to be), but remarkable enough, and harrowing enough, for my taste. As if to keep up the voodoo till the last possible moment, my journey back was as much of a nightmare as my journey out. Not until I reached the fair and blessed city of Oxford, a day and a half later, did my troubles cease. The formalities before take-off from Yaoundé were complex and gruelling, the waiting sweaty and interminable, the flight bumpy to the point where one wondered why the wings did not fall off the aircraft; at Douala I thought my penances were over, but on the contrary the whole fandango started up again, with mysterious pieces of paper that had to be stamped, or torn out, or whatever, by lethargic officials at desks besieged by frantic passengers terrified, as I was terrified, of being held up till they missed their flight. At last I was free of it all, I had my mystic pieces of paper in my damp hand, I was moving towards embarkation, surely now I could relax?

Relax, hell. I was motioned by a fierce-looking soldier, complete with giant revolver, into a small cubicle hung with thick curtains. In my dazed state I thought this was probably a screening for weapons, but he backed me against a wall and demanded, in loud, threatening tones, to know something or other, I was not clear what. I am not expert in following African French, and his question, which in fact concerned the amount of currency I had on me, was couched in totally unfamiliar terms. He used some formula to describe the currency, something like "*argent uni*" or an equally opaque piece of gibberish, that for the moment had me completely baffled; in any case, I am frightened of soldiers with guns, especially when they back me against the wall of a small cubicle. I had visions of being detained, of being flung into a cell, of rotting away the last years of my life in a tropical prison. He roared out his question again, and this time, mercifully, I understood him. Of the modest amount of cash I had, some was in my wallet and some loose in my pocket. I dragged out the notes that were in my pocket and showed them to him. He looked at them and motioned me to leave.

AND, NOW THAT it is all over and I am home, what did anybody get out of it all? The Cameroonian Ministry of Culture and Information, who spent quite a lot of money on my visit, have got this article, and I hope that at least some passages in it will make acceptable reading for them. For my part, I got several things of value. First, there is a small area of tropical West Africa that I actually know in some detail, so that when someone says "Cameroon" I see definite images. This, to me at least, is the principal reason for going anywhere: an acquaintance with the nature of the world. Second, I have now seen a Third World country which is not starving, not disease-ridden, not undermined by desperation, not dependent for its very survival on crumbs from the white man's table. Third, even if it never happens to me to meet him again, I have feelings of affection and friendship for at any rate one Cameroonian citizen. And, in the words that George Orwell chose for the last sentence of his first book, "That is a beginning."

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GREAT are the moments when the mask slips. Uriah Heep forgets to be 'umble; the Queen of the Night turns out to be a villain; the Watergate tapes are played. This summer in London saw a similar, if minor, *coup de théâtre*. Future historians may recall it as The "*Sod you*" Incident.

In case you missed it, here's a brief résumé. On 24 August the London *Times* printed photographs of the seven models short-listed from a total of 79 in a competition to fill the north-west corner of Trafalgar Square and provide an extension to the National Gallery. One looked rather like a supermarket, another a shuttered bunker, and two resembled multi-storey car parks. Two others might have been university libraries. Most were adorned with toy cars, Lowry pedestrians, and miniature trees apparently made of dried broccoli. No surprise so far. But the seventh design was by Richard Rogers. Does the name sound familiar? You may be thinking of Richard Rodgers, composer colleague of Hart & Hammerstein; but since he also wrote "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" and "Hallelujah I'm a Bum" the mistake could be natural. *This* Richard Rogers is the man who gave us the Beaubourg building of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, that oil refinery of culture, with all the pipes on the outside. To judge from the photograph, he plans a similar coup in London: a shining tower from some H. G. Wells movie, flanked by another industrial or car-park edifice with rows of big deck-chair-like cubicles on the roof. But that's not all.

According to *The Times*, Mr Owen Luder, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, "pre-empted the official and eminent judges in the competition."

> He wasted little time examining the models submitted . . . and pointed to the plastic confection of rounded towers and sunken walkways submitted by the Richard Rogers partnership.
>
> "I hope they have the courage to choose that one", Mr Luder said. "That is the work of a man who has said, 'That is what I think the answer is. and sod you.' The others have all been overawed by the site."

Looking around at the concrete dreck deposited in our cities, I've often wondered what present-day architects privately think of their creations. Now we know. "Brutalism" was a term we learned to live with, but at least it had pretensions to a rationale: "honesty", "truth to the medium", and all that. To anyone who remembered the 1930s and W. H. Auden's call for "New styles of architecture, a change of heart", the brutalists seemed tired and rather testy heirs of functionalism, slapping the set menu down like cross waitresses, but still convinced that it was nourishing. The "*Sod you*" school championed by Mr Luder is, er, a house of a different colour.

Note the mock-heroics of his quoted statement. "I hope they have the courage"—courage, mark you, not "judgment", "discrimination", or "good sense." And "That is the work of a man who has said . . . ." Am I alone in calling to mind Sir Walter Scott?

> *Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,*
> *Who never to* The Times *has said,*
> *"Sod you!"*

The swagger is all of a piece with other rhetoric from the champions of ruthless architecture, forever denouncing the "clutter", "disorder", "fussiness", "imitation", and "pretence" which ordinary people like, and decreeing that buildings in the future must have "clean lines." What's new, however, is the extra aggressiveness—springing no doubt from a fear that perhaps, at last, the jig is up. The signs of revolt, in fact, have been growing for some time.

The first I noticed was many years ago, at school. The art master, a keen apostle of Le Corbusier, was showing us pictures of "ghastly" mock-Tudor suburban villas, and contrasting them with the white-painted apartment palaces in parkland he proposed instead. For once, my love of home came to the surface. "But, Sir", I faltered, "I live in one of those villas, and it's much nicer than a flat." Thunderbolts? No; perplexity for a moment, then a chorus of other voices, all admitting the same truth. Incorrigible middlebrows, the master must have thought.

The next example was a drawing by the brilliant French cartoonist Sempé: it showed the architect of some forbidding future city returning home to his cosy 18th-century *fermette*. Then came Jacques Tati's *Mon oncle*, with its friendly *vieux quartier* set against the chilly pretensions of M. and Mme Arpel's automated modern home. After that, it was no surprise to learn, belatedly, that Le Corbusier's *unités d'habitation* had proved unpopular with the very people they were intended to house.

Further indications now came pell-mell. In Britain, tower blocks were a haven for vandals. Some crumbled, and had to be demolished. Superinsulation produced damp through condensation; compulsory under-floor heating grew too expen-

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sive for many council tenants. High-rise buildings, it was soon discovered, were not necessarily synonymous with high-density accommodation. Communal gardens were neglected. New towns went to seed.

Meanwhile, alternatives flourished. Port-Grimaud, a completely new marina-town with waterside flats and houses done up to look like higgledy-piggledy fishermen's cottages, was mocked and excoriated by the cognoscenti: but it enjoyed huge success. "Older properties" (as estate agents call them) were now at a premium; modern blocks remained empty. In one such office building, the architects had imposed their own "*Sod you*" views on everything, including the signs on the lavatories: "MEN" and "WOMEN" the doors sternly read. The women working there objected: they wanted to be ladies. And they won. Not long afterwards, that great humanist of architectural history, J. M. Richards, republished what in 1946 had been a bravely affectionate study of suburbia, *The Castles on the Ground*. In his preface to the new edition he remarked on "our recent discovery that buildings designed by good architects do not always enhance the environment, and that poorly designed buildings can sometimes, by accident, do exactly that...." Doesn't the tone, somehow, strike you as more attractive than Mr Luder's?

More recently, of course, in a quite different tone, Tom Wolfe has blazed a tendentious trail *From Bauhaus to Our House*,[1] claiming that fashion imposed on American modern architecture a style devised for workers' housing in Europe. Like many of Wolfe's theses, it's a fruitful exaggeration, dazzlingly expressed. At heart, I feel, the man's a dear old fuddy-duddy disguised as a dandified tearaway—a Norman Rockwell in Wolfe's clothing. But, as always, he hits a nerve: the sore point made ever more tender by the onslaught of repetitive, dehumanised, uncontrollably vast contemporary buildings, whose implicit message to us, in a cold, computerised voice, is: "We are big—you are small. We are strong—you are weak. We are permanent—you will die. Obey us." In other words, "*Sod you*."

THE CURE for unquestioning faith in Communism, it's said, is a visit to Moscow. Any unquestioning disciple of Adam Smith free enterprise should take a walk round the City of London, especially under the ramparts of the banks. A more dwarfing experience I've never had. The great cathedrals don't do that to us: staring up at the soaring tracery, we feel uplifted ourselves. I once published a cartoon of a dumpy couple menaced by the downward-pointing spikes of a decorated Gothic arch: it was captioned "Cowed by architecture." Unfair on medieval masons, but not on modern capitalists' architectural consultants—or on those municipalities which have outdone Hitler in their postwar Baedeker raids on Britain's provincial towns. What price Birmingham's Bull Ring? Well, perhaps the cost of the requisite TNT.

Which brings us to the obvious question: what can be done? In places, time has made a start on demolition; but most of the monstrosities are far too solid to fall down by themselves, and plenty of explosive will be needed to get rid of them. A job for the young unemployed? An alternative to IRA fun-and-games? A new target for the animal liberationists, tired of releasing killer minks? Conceivably: but who's to decide what should go, how's the job to be funded, and what replacements are to be made? Like so many issues, these boil down to a matter of money and taste.

Mammon, as I've hinted, is a founder-member of the "*Sod you*" club. Recent months have seen much discussion of what's to be erected on the south bank of the Thames in place of the proposed "Green Giant." No one, so far as I've seen, has suggested the right solution: nothing. Why not clear the whole area to make way for grass, trees, and flowers? London's chief glories are its huge public parks. But no: today, that would be too wasteful—so yet another eyesore now threatens the skyline, despite the well-known Government warning that ziggurats can seriously damage your health.

Money, too—or greed for it—explains the dullness of so much modern building. It's cheaper to mould ferro-concrete than to carve stone; it would add to the cost to put some pleasant tawny dye into the concrete-mixer. Isoplane doors filled with solidified sawdust can be mass-produced; so can ready-made windows in aluminium frames or with clumsy wooden glazing bars. Open-plan buildings with low ceilings and removable partitions may make all new offices look identical: but that's the whole idea—they suit any client. Detail, like bespoke tailoring, can double the price.

These are facts of life: but what gets my goat is the way in which cost-consciousness masquerades as aesthetics. It reminds me of Ministry of Food announcements in Wartime, telling listeners one week that potatoes are good for us (because they're plentiful), and the next (when there's a shortage) that they're not. Given the choice, would any normal person line his living-room with bare brick? Prefer to eat in the kitchen? Do away with internal walls and privacy? Build a major art gallery, like the Hayward, in grey rough-cast concrete patterned only by the traces of its timber cladding? Put up tall buildings round Hyde Park and destroy its illusion of rurality? Tolerate that Gargantuan sparking-plug, the Post Office Tower?

[1] From *Bauhaus to* Our House. by TOM WOLFE. Farrar, Strauss, $10.95; Cape, £6.95.

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THE WEASEL WORD is "normal." By that I mean "like myself." And didactic friends in the profession have a ready retort: live in the 20th century, they say. It's long enough now since Auden & Co celebrated the beauty of pylons. Surely you can appreciate what the modern world has to offer? You like Paris, you say. But Baron Haussmann was attacked as a modernist. The Eiffel Tower was as startling as Beaubourg in its day. The past you admire was once the present, a daring leap into the future. Are you afraid to make that leap now?

I've heard all that so often that I despair of answering; but let me try. First, the past has a patina which we should respect. Seen cold, the Eiffel Tower is not at all inspiring—yet we're so used to it that we hardly pay attention. Our minds don't dwell on the girders; our heads are full of accordion tunes, the smell of Gauloises and garlic, the prospect of sharp argument, crisp new books, good food and films—all the attractions of Paris, to taste. A building is its associations as well as itself. Who otherwise would care much for the Houses of Parliament? So we mourn when old landmarks come down. Age and familiarity are virtues in themselves.

Secondly, only a few of today's innovations are likely to be comparable with the best new buildings from the past. Novelty is no guarantee of quality: nor, by heaven, is shock. A year or so ago, some bright spark from, I suppose, the Greater London Council saw fit to embellish Regent's Park with plastic statues of the comedians Morecambe and Wise. This in full view of the Nash terraces. Well, you can argue, as my professional friends do, that Nash was a sharpie developer whose façades outshone his interiors; you can admit that his "Metropolitan Improvements" were a daring, perhaps even shocking innovation. But I can't myself believe that he or his clients would have tolerated pop art effigies of contemporary clowns in the park.

Finally, must we really embrace our century? It's a little like embracing barbed wire. President Pompidou insisted that Paris should—with the results we see: more traffic on the *voies sur berge*; the domineering Montparnasse tower; the Alphaville complex of *La Défense*; and, above all, the bulbous Beaubourg, blowing its eternal raspberry at *la ville lumière*. London, of course, now has its Barbican Arts blockhouse. Personally, I find it all as pathetically arrogant as the once reviled Victorians, imposing a generation's transient taste in the sacred name of progress. In art, or music, or literature, it would matter less: we can take the product or leave it alone. In architecture, we have no choice: it confronts us whichever way we turn. Frank Lloyd Wright once said it neatly: "The physician can bury his mistakes, but the architect can only advise his client to plant vines." Or buy gelignite. And one of our needs as human beings—in architecture as in everything else—is an occasional escape from the tyranny of the present.

CONSIDER filing trays: IN, OUT and PENDING. OUT we can forget. IN contains our 20th-century worries. But PENDING is the magic tray: put problems into it, a wise and lazy friend once advised me, and you'll be surprised how many of them solve themselves. Less cynically, it's the tray we need as a safeguard against going mad. Without it, we should torment ourselves incessantly over matters we can't at present tackle. We need to forget them, safely, until we can act.

So it is with the 20th century. It bristles with anxieties: the Cold War, the Middle East, unemployment, rising prices, urban stress, technological risks of every kind—not to mention our private and personal troubles. Must we embrace all of them, all the time? Of course not: we put them in the PENDING tray. We walk in the park, take a weekend in the country, listen to Mozart, paint; we climb, we sail, we take a meal in some fancy restaurant got up as a Swiss chalet or a Mexican hacienda. Alternatively, we visit Bath or stroll past the Nash terraces, soothing ourselves (and preparing our courage) with a sense that all can be well and peaceful; that human life can be elegant and noble; that the individual can defy corporate mediocrity; that detail can enhance, not obfuscate; that proportion and harmony are not lost for ever; that we can share some shred of a vanished, perhaps imagined golden age; that our own makeshift actions can be guided by the wisdom of our ancestors—in short that civilisation is enduring and continuous, not a series of generation gaps, sterile conflicts, strident slogans, and cries of "*Sod you!*"

M

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Two Poems by Peter Redgrove

A Kinsman

I
Echoes, the cadavers of noises, bloated.
He has passed along the upper roads,
That is, as a risen spirit,
Not as an echo or similitude or reflection,
But concentrated, at focus, intensely bright.

II
The lightning confuses heaven and earth in its instant.
Those who die from it make vile concussed ghosts,
A virulent fulminate of heaven and earth.
He is not one of those whiteblack creatures
Like charred water.

III
I did not steal from him to harm him.
It was to affirm our ties, to manifest
And strengthen them. Such a joke
Is an excellent form of kinship, possibly
The only one; anyway
The only one we can sustain, here below.

IV
Those terrible ghosts; one may endure
A complete transformation, as the
Charcoal showers from blasted trees, white lightning
Transformed instantaneously into its opposite.
Albinos were struck by lightning in the womb.
We honour the chameleon changing from white to black
Like a dead African being reborn.

V
The grease that made him shine as usual, the cosmetics
We painted his cadaver with, they declared
His original richness, his potential radiance.
His earthly radiance
Had touched me as with a hand, the palpable
And affable truth. He has an angel
That would light up the whole room
With a radiance the size of a pin's point
In which all my thefts would lie disclosed, forgiven
As among kinsmen sharing our goods and riches
Including my sly darkness and his radiance.

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The Brothel in Fairyland

The courtesan with a taper guides
A young man to her mosquito-net.

There is a river-party in full swing
With hired geisha, and three courtesans
Dance their winding dance on the
Landing-stage of a teahouse. It is called

A teahouse where we drink the girls
And meditate on the tea, the women
Dressed like peony-gardens fill the fairyland
Of painted screens and doors, their shadows
Lie solid on the layers of mosquito-net

Where a woman holds up a stone saké-dish
With cherry-blossoms in it and beckons to a client
Unseen behind the mosquito-net, the stone steps
Shining with the little lamps hovering,

And a lighted-up pleasure-boat like a wedding-cake
Iced with light, a "fairy-boat"
Does its winding dance
Like a torchlit procession down the guts of the river,
It passes on the current swiftly; we glimpse
On the deck a woman holding up a bamboo cage
Of fireflies and pointing at them.

In Japanese, "fairyland", in English, "brothel."

The fairyland is full of candlelight, perfumes, and electrical skins,
You can feel them as they pass on their currents swiftly
Entering your skin and leaving it, gliding by
In their visible skirts, touching you
With their invisible clothes, their electrical dress
Such as a forest makes, or a wooden boat
Blazing with candles, or a swiftly-flowing river makes,
Or a floating fairyland with geisha and three courtesans
Trailing the enclosure in their long skirts

Like a painted yacht in lacquer and brightwork
And a screen by the enclosure announcing business
With a shaped electrical picture of Madame Twoswords,
Lightning in a peony gown. Many holy ghosts

Crowd round her to see the outcome of that fight.

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Is "Neo-Conservatism" Viable?

By Elie Kedourie

THE term "Neo-Conservatism" has, in recent years, become quite current in US political debate. There even appeared a fairly large book by Peter Steinfels[1] on the subject which dealt, in a generally unfriendly and logic-chopping manner, with the views principally of Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Daniel Bell, whom the author considers to be the chief proponents of this trend of thought. These writers—and others who are also labelled as "Neo-Conservative"—are, of course, very different from one another. What makes it nevertheless reasonable to give them this common label is the hostility they all, in greater or lesser measure, evince to official policies and intellectual currents which became dominant in the United States in the last two decades. Neo-Conservatism constitutes a reaction to such policies as President Johnson's "Great Society"; Affirmative Action, the Civil Rights movement and Women's Liberation. Neo-Conservatism is hostile to these policies or movements on the score that they are the outcome of ideologies which misapprehend the character of society; they prescribe aims impossible to fulfil, and the attempt to fulfil them produces greater evils than those it was desired to cure.

One prominent feature of Neo-Conservatism is that associated with so-called "Supply-side economics." The contention here is that economic growth and continuing prosperity—which Western societies have come to desire and expect—depend on entrepreneurial initiative, inventiveness, and risk-taking. The business of government is to ensure that these qualities and modes of behaviour are not maimed or destroyed by punitive fiscal policies, imprudent monetary policies, or vexatious administrative practices. The very name of this theory, supply-side economics, emphasises the fact that it is directed against policies and tendencies which purport to derive from Keynesian economic analysis. This analysis is taken to show that economic stagnation and recession, and the unsettling and disruptive character of the business cycle in modern industrial economies, result from a failure in demand. The duty of government, it follows, is to stimulate failing demand and, in general, to pursue an anti-cyclical policy of demand-management. This, in turn, is carried on with the help of economic indicators, which are sets of statistics from which skilled and experienced econometricians predict future economic trends, thus enabling their political masters to "fine-tune" the economy, and to shield it from the mishaps of the trade-cycle.

It is obvious that this must lead to an interventionist and *dirigiste* style of government. It is a very self-confident and ambitious style, given to active strategies of public investment, of manipulation of the supply of money and of interest and exchange rates. Like virtuoso organists, the Minister of Political Economy and his learned and expert calculists, pressing these keys, pulling those stops, and depressing those other pedals, produce a happy economy and a harmonious body-politic. But this ambitious style has proved far too ambitious. Government direction of the economy, supply-side critics have not failed to point out, far from being beneficent "fine-tuning", has proved to be a blundering hit-or-miss affair, the result of which has been to debauch the currency, to misdirect investment, and to encourage a cacophony of popular demands and sectional claims ruinous for any government to satisfy.

ECONOMIC INTERVENTIONISM has gone hand-in-hand with an equally ambitious policy aiming to abolish poverty and to promote equality of condition among various classes and ethnic groups, as well as between the sexes. The attempt to realise these aims has led to an enormous increase in the number of clerks, social workers, and other officials deemed necessary to administer "Welfare", promote "social planning" and enforce equality, non-discrimination and "affirmative action." It has also led to a great waste of public funds, and—what is worse and in the long run much more dangerous—to the coming into being of a mass of

[1] Peter Steinfels, *The Neoconservatives: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics* (1979).

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clients dependent on public subventions, in whom any sense of enterprise and self-respect, any desire for self-help rapidly disappears. Such policies, the Neo-Conservatives have pointed out, have not "abolished poverty" or diminished social tensions, nor can they possibly do so.

THE FAILURE of "demand management" and of welfarism constitutes, then, the gravamen of the Neo-Conservative indictment of the ruling ideas and policies of the last few decades. Supply-side economics and a social policy which promotes self-help, preserves the self-respect of the bread-winner, and hence protects the family and the social fabric, are the counterpart of this critique of Keynesian interventionism and of Great-Society activism.

But policies are by definition a matter of practice, where the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Suppose then that supply-side economics, either because it is timidly pursued or for some other reason, seems to fail in its promise, or at least to take longer to yield its fruit than politicians with an eye on election time-tables are willing to wait. Suppose again that, for similar reasons, politicians will flinch from the outcry which may follow an attempt to move away from the jungle of subsidies and the swamp of welfarism. Can Neo-Conservatism offer arguments able to withstand the chances and changes of political and economic life or reasons which can explain and thus transcend and make acceptable the vicissitudes which any body politic from time to time inevitably undergoes?

IT IS CLEAR THAT economic science is not to be looked to here. This science constitutes a system of deductions from various hypotheses. As in any other science, its practitioners will always dispute among themselves as to the validity of deductions and the reasonableness of hypotheses. The route, furthermore, which purports to lead from the propositions of the science to the activities of the market-place and the expedients of Treasury officials is roundabout, treacherous, and sometimes even non-existent.

"Monetarism is not enough." Neither is Keynesianism. They are not "enough" because politics is not economics. The policies associated with Keynesianism, for instance, in their hit-or-miss fashion implicitly hint at a vision of society and its governance much more far-reaching than technical issues relating to "failure of demand" or "pump-priming", and the like. In this vision, there is hostility to the private accumulation, management and transmission of capital. John Maynard Keynes looked forward to the euthanasia of the rentier, and dismissed the long run because "in the long run we are all dead." The longest stretch of human life this outlook is concerned with is no longer than a generation—one's own. Here is the vision of a society composed of ephemeral individuals who, like butterflies, flutter for a brief spell in the bright air and then are gone—to be replaced, in an endless cycle, by other multitudes who in turn have their brief hour. Our economist surveying from the heights these perishable, evanescent generations will, with a judicious priming of the pump here, a gentle restraint of demand there, enable these masses to live out, painlessly, comfortably, even pleasurably, their allotted span.

THERE IS A CONNECTION between this patronising conception of economic management and the outlook described in Keynes's celebrated essay, *My Early Beliefs*.[2] He there confessed that in their youth he and his circle had "completely misunderstood human nature" and disastrously so; that their view of human nature "led to a thinness, a superficiality not only of judgement, but also of feeling"; that they were like "water-spiders, gracefully skimming, as light and reasonable as air, the surface of the stream without any contact at all with the eddies and currents underneath. . . ." They were "not aware that civilisation was a thin and precarious crust erected by the personality and the will of a very few, and only maintained by rules and conventions skilfully put across and guilefully preserved." They "repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom." "We were, that is to say", Keynes declared, "in the strict sense of the term, immoralists." But he added, describing his own attitude at the time he wrote his memoir (in 1938, when he was fifty-five years old) "I remain, and always will remain, an immoralist."

What may have started out by being a youthful, naive feeling of superiority, a conviction of having seen through, and been liberated from, obscurantism and hypocrisy, became with the passing years something distinctly coarser and more complacently cynical, the original feeling of superiority hardening into the self-certain and brittle arrogance of the intellectual. The Keynes who appears in Michael Holroyd's biography of Lytton Strachey gives us an inkling of the deterioration. In any case, Keynes's immoralism was incoherent. His social time-span did not extend beyond one generation; and it is reasonable to associate this narrow and distorted vision with his immoralism. For "a generation", taken on its own, is an inherently self-contradictory notion. Any generation has forbears and descendants. This fact underlies, and makes sense of, innumerable activities which

[2] John Maynard Keynes, *My Early Beliefs* (1949).

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would never have been undertaken if men had not been intimately convinced of the utter irrelevance—and essential untruth—of the proposition that in the long run we are all dead. On the contrary: in the long run there is an endless chain of living generations, one generation giving life and transmitting its capital, material and spiritual, to the following generation.

SUCH CONSIDERATIONS, having to do with the maintenance, the stability and the continuity of a society, are among the properly political ones, and a level of discourse pitched at their level may enable political men to see that economic theory and its prescriptions, large as they loom, are yet subordinate issues, to be approached with a doubly sceptical frame of mind: scepticism about the relation between analysis and prescription, and scepticism about the lasting efficacy of any policy in a world where a multitude of diverse agents make their individual decisions in constantly changing conditions.

A similar point is to be made about "Welfarism", the other great issue about which Neo-Conservatives have written a great deal. The case for welfarism rests on two assumptions—that equality ought to be the proper condition of society; and that government can institute equality. But there is no way of establishing that equality is more just or more natural than inequality. The very attempt to specify a state of society in which equality reigns soon breaks down, so multitudinous and so various are the qualifications and the exceptions which have to be introduced, and so incommensurable are the qualities which produce inequalities. A case of sorts, shaky and riddled with various absurdities, has been made out for the progressive taxation of incomes. But how is one to deal with good looks or with great native intelligence which raise their possessors above the general condition (but in ways which escape the criteria of the Inland Revenue)?

Equality requires, in fact, constant and detailed official intervention in the most private affairs, in order for it to be instituted and maintained—intervention which must, in turn, involve perpetual disturbance of existing relationships and expectations, and thus perpetual exacerbation of social tensions. "Equality" which aims at the creation of a more wholesome and peaceable society thus paradoxically leads to querulousness and contention. This is the significance of Epicurus's injunction to his disciples—to which Hegel drew attention—against holding property in common, because this shows distrust, and distrust is destructive of friendship. Again, since equality is not part of the natural order, it requires an equaliser who will bring it about and maintain it. The equaliser must, therefore, be above those whom he compels to be equal; to establish equality thus paradoxically demands inequality.[3] And this, in a nutshell, describes Soviet despotism.

WELFARISM is also predicated on the notion that society can be "planned." That it cannot is a truth which both theory and practice proclaim. "Planning" simply engenders a bureaucratic labyrinth in which arbitrariness and irrationality flourish. What is largely lost in this labyrinth is the possibility of bringing under control, and making accountable to the citizens, the host of public servants who draft, interpret, and administer the numerous detailed rules and the equally numerous exceptions which "planning" necessitates. Public responsibility is thus dissipated, and the very notion of responsibility emptied of real meaning. The authority of government is likewise lost as it becomes the prisoner of these procedures and processes and of the organised groups whose well-being and livelihood have become bound up with the large and complex structures which "planning" conjures up.

Authority is also dissipated and lost in the attempt to formulate policy over matters where policy is utterly rebellious to formulation: What is the proper size of the British car industry? How many nurses will be necessary ten years hence? How many universities should there be in Great Britain? Answers to such questions (which various British Governments have asked in recent decades) might as well have been chosen with a pin or drawn out of a hat, for by their very nature they could not but be arbitrary and whimsical. Sudden expansion of university education two decades ago, and its sudden contraction now, is an admirable case in point. In 1961 a Conservative administration decreed, in the privacy of its own counsels, that university expansion—advocated in the Report of a well-known Committee—was the thing to go for. The decision committed a large—and increasing—amount of taxpayers' money to an enterprise the desirability, extent, and shape of which no Minister or official had the means of determining except by flimsy and hazardous guesswork.

The same kind of arbitrariness which presided over expansion now necessarily presides over contraction. "Cost-benefit analysis" was declared to justify the expenditure, and "cost-benefit analysis" likewise to justify the cut in the expenditure. But such analysis is; from the nature of things, as watertight as a sieve: for the cost of educating a university student is open to endless

[3] Appropriately enough, the cosh or the gun is known in slang as "the equaliser."

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debate, while the benefits to be set against the cost are even more problematic.

In any case, is not such analysis itself largely out of place in this kind of activity? Here, then, is one class of decisions which Ministers, and *a fortiori* Conservative Ministers, should have been eager not to take, but rather to leave to students and their parents. This would have had the advantage of preserving and enhancing the citizen's freedom to spend his own money, rather than having it extracted from him and spent on his behalf. It would have increased freedom of choice, and promoted the citizen's feeling of responsibility for himself and his family—to strengthen which feeling is to strengthen the body politic itself.

UNIVERSITY POLICY, so-called, is only a small example of the misconceived enterprises to which the desire to do good, the love of power, and the itch for busyness lure public men. Another, much more glaring and serious, example may be found in the promises, so blithely given, that full employment shall be instituted and forever maintained. The world being what it is, such a promise could not possibly be kept. This is like the government promising perpetual sunshine. It is, of course, the case that in a modern industrial economy, the link between one's own livelihood and the general state of the economy is neither visible nor readily comprehensible. Remote causes like the unit cost of a Japanese car and the price exacted for OPEC oil will make workmen in Coventry and Detroit workless. But it is very natural that loss of work, disappointed expectations and impoverishment should be laid at the door not of these remote causes, but of a Government dependent on the popular suffrage. In these circumstances governments will do what they have to do, and what they can do, to alleviate and to remedy. But they bring great trouble on themselves, and on the societies for which they are responsible, by employing the rhetoric of omnicompetence, and even Conservative governments have been so seduced in the last few decades.

IS THIS activist style of government now inescapable for administrations which call themselves Conservative? And is it the case that between *conservative* ideas and a political party calling itself "Conservative" there need be no enduring or necessary connection?

In a parliamentary régime, parties are in competition to gain and preserve power. Competition may stimulate product differentiation; but the differentiation can sometimes turn out to be a mere difference in labels—the article produced by one party becoming essentially the same as that marketed by its competitors. The rhetoric of a Conservative party becomes umbilically related to the slogans of its rivals. The phenomenon is well known: the Whigs went bathing, and the Conservatives ran away with their clothes. The Reform Bill of 1867 illustrates the dialectic whereby Tweedledum ends up by being Tweedledee's mirror-image. Again, for three decades after 1945, varieties of "Butskellism" proliferated, and Taper and Tadpole prospered mightily.

There is another inherent reason why Tweedledee will set the pace, with Tweedledum finding it difficult not to follow. Since 1945 Ministers have found themselves the ostensible masters of a Civil Service in whom the experience of world war has perpetuated habits of centralisation, and instilled *dirigiste* and interventionist instincts. With all its weight and complexity, the administrative machine may give Ministers the feeling of being at the controls of a powerful engine which responds obediently and punctually to their bidding. But perhaps the term "control" is misleading here, and symbiosis may more aptly describe the relation between politicians and administrators. In this cosy symbiosis, we wonder whether scope is left for a political idiom which can create and maintain a recognisably conservative universe of discourse common to political leaders and those whom they represent—a universe of discourse which might make the contingencies of politics both intelligible and manageable.

A common conservative idiom of politics has other dangerous enemies to contend with. Man's misfortune, as Pascal said, is that he cannot for long sit still in an empty room. Silence and stillness have become more difficult than ever to secure. We are daily and hourly overwhelmed by a cataract of "news", and of views and opinions, to an extent which has never happened before in the history of the world. It must issue in a craving for novelty which feeds upon itself. This is inherent in the operation of the communications media, whose unenviable *raison d'être* must be the perpetual provision at all costs of distraction and entertainment. In the media, politics must become a drama, a spectacle, a "show" in which the viewer finds it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between political action and actors playing at politics. This drains all reality and seriousness out of political life, and transforms it into the floating world of the media men, the hallmark of which is frivolity, volatility, and instability.

NEO-CONSERVATIVES discern other issues which affect the stability and good government of a modern industrial society. Irving Kristol, for instance, has touched on, and discussed these

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themes in two collections of essays (*On the Democratic Idea in America*, 1972; and *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, 1978). Capitalism, he considers, is a spiritually impoverished civilisation; it is morally and intellectually unprepared for calamity. The dynamics of the capitalist economy engender nihilism in which free spirits, emptied of spiritual substance, are still driven by primordial moral aspirations. The attempt to realise these aspirations, in a society whose traditions have been emasculated, can wreak frightful havoc. In any event, there is now a yawning gap between personal values and social institutions which, as a result, become deprived of all moral legitimacy. The predicament, as Kristol sees it, is summed up in the eloquent last paragraph of an essay on equality included in *Two Cheers*:

> "The real trouble [Kristol declares] is not sociological or economic at all. It is that the 'middling' nature of a bourgeois society falls short of corresponding adequately to the full range of man's spiritual nature, which makes more than middling demands upon the universe, and demands more than middling answers. This weakness of bourgeois society has been highlighted by its intellectual critics from the very beginning. And it is this weakness that generates continual dissatisfaction, especially among those for whom material problems are no longer so urgent. They may speak about 'equality'; they may even be obsessed with statistics and pseudo-statistics about equality; but it is a religious vacuum—a lack of meaning in their own lives, and the absence of a sense of larger purpose in their society—that terrifies them and provokes them to 'alienation' and unappeasable indignation. It is not too much to say that it is the death of God, not the emergence of any new social or economic trends, that haunts bourgeois society. And *this* problem is far beyond the competence of politics to cope with."

If, as Kristol argues, the problem of assimilating the moral authority of tradition into capitalism is *beyond* the competence of politics, the scope of Neo-Conservative thought has to be very narrow indeed. But, in fact, conservative discourse is considerably broader. Even if issues such as the meaning of religion in the modern world are left aside, conservative thought does encompass themes much wider than economics—and has to, unless it is to be completely defenceless in the face of powerful and wide-ranging ideological claims. It may, of course, prove to be the case that the obstacles to its inculcation and dissemination are too great to surmount. However this may be, conservatism defines itself in contrast, and disagreement, with four ways of thinking about politics which, in one form or another, have been and still are widely prevalent in the West.

1. THE FIRST of these is *liberalism*. At its broadest, this view sees the body politic as made up of individuals each endowed with natural rights. But the notion of an individual is an incoherent abstraction. For there can be no individuals, understood literally and strictly as such. We may start in search of the individual, but instead of him, we will find fathers and sons, husbands and wives, members of religious congregations, employers and employees, artists and patrons, authors and readers. . . .The individual can only know and define himself when acting and reacting within such networks which are made, kept in repair, and modified by him and his fellow-individuals. Taken to its extreme, the notion of an individual leads to the search for authenticity. Authenticity is taken to be that which a human being possesses when all the artificial accretions of society and social restraints are removed. Hence authenticity is the only possible self-fulfilment. This search for authenticity is anarchic and nihilistic since it involves the rejection of all institutions, of all customs, of all traditions. It must thus lead to self-destruction.

2. The "*contractarian mode*" is a second inadequate way of thinking about politics. According to this view, the body politic functions in terms of a contract between the citizens, or between the citizens as a whole and the government, which defines the rights and duties of each side. But belonging to a polity is not the outcome of a contract. People are either born into a polity or declare allegiance—which is unconditional—to a polity which they join. "Contractarianism" cannot accommodate or account for the idea of allegiance, or those of loyalty and patriotism—ideas without which it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to sustain for long a political discourse.

3. A third way of thinking about politics by contrast to which conservatism defines itself is *utilitarianism*. The worth of everything, including political institutions—utilitarians hold—is judged (or rather computed) by its utility to someone or other, whether in the short or the long run. This is simply untrue. The most important and enduring human relations are not initiated or maintained for the sake of some utility extrinsic to these relations. Love, friendship, family affection, loyalty to a community or a state, art and scholarship, are all pursued for their own sake and their value lies in themselves. Utilitarianism makes discourse about such pursuits and relations impossible; or else, finding it difficult not to say something about such manifestly essential features of humanity, it ends by tying itself up in hopeless knots.

4. *Marxism* is the latest, and today the most formidable, adversary against which conservatism has to measure itself. Formidable, not because of its intellectual merits, but because it can be so

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easily boiled down into slogans of slick simplicity and specious profundity, irresistible in their appeal to multitudes whose innate common sense provides little defence against the corruptions of literacy. And formidable, not least, because the extensive resources of powerful despotisms are employed relentlessly to reiterate the formulas and drum out the message.

As for the intellectual merit of Marxism, there is none in claiming that all social relations necessarily depend on the "ownership of means of production"; that politics is simply expropriation (and the expropriation of expropriation); that the disappearance of private property will lead to the classless society and the consequent disappearance of the state. All these propositions are historically false and philosophically flawed.

It is, of course, true that human beings are not properly human unless they possess property. It does not, however, follow that politics is no more than a quarrel about property. On the contrary, it is politics and law which mediate quarrels about property and enable them to be settled—and nothing but law, and the state which maintains it, can possibly discharge this function. This is because property cannot, inherently, provide security for itself, just as the market is, equally inherently, incapable of policing itself. State and law are logically prior to family, property, and the market. The necessity and authority of law and the state emanate neither from a contract nor from their ability to promote a particular pattern of property (or the absence of it). They arise from the very character of human activities in all their variety, originality, and contradictoriness which the law mediates and the state protects. Anything beyond this, the state cannot do well, or at all. This is true of economic management, of the establishment of equality, or the hundred and one enterprises with which governments think they have to busy themselves.

ONLY THE STATE can provide protection for the citizens, and this is particularly true of protection against outside threat. Such protection requires forces to be made ready, to be husbanded, and to be used whenever danger threatens, prudence dictates, or advantage requires. These kinds of consideration will force themselves on anyone who has charge of a state, whatever the political discourse with which he is familiar or in which he is at home. But the political discourse of liberalism has no way of accommodating itself to the realities of a world where many states exist which have no common superior, and conflict between whom is always liable to break out. "Contractarianism" and "utilitarianism" likewise do not know how to speak about, let alone deal with, international conflict, or international order which, in its precariousness, depends on the balance of power—to restore and maintain which itself requires power, decisiveness and skill. As for Marxism, conflict is, naturally, of its essence. But it labours under the fallacy that all conflict is really and ultimately class conflict. The doctrine thus hinders discrimination between the great variety of conflicts which can oppose state to state. It is also barbarous in that it sees no end to, and no remedy for, conflict until the last expropriator is annihilated and class domination for ever abolished.

Conservative discourse is thus most at home with international relations as they really are. It is least prone to fancy, most able to cope with a world where perpetual peace is a destructive illusion, but where conflict is by no means perpetual, and its assuagement not a hopeless illusion. In fact, of all modes of political discourse available to the modern world, conservative discourse is the one which hugs most closely the shape of this world, and is least problematic in understanding, and coping with, its dangers and its promise.

BUT HERE, TOO, it does not necessarily follow that conservative discourse will be favoured or used by a Conservative administration. The Falklands affair is a case in point. It is of course true that in this, as in any other, conflict all kinds of arguments are employed, usually without much regard to their provenance, entailments, or implications, provided they serve to buttress one's case and persuade the world of its justice. But unregarded implications have a way sometimes of springing back on one in disagreeable or inconvenient ways.

In the Falklands conflict the Government stressed quite frequently that they were opposing the Argentinian invasion because the inhabitants of the Falklands desired to live, not under Argentinian but under British rule. Suppose, then, that the Falklanders were to change their mind, or that the inhabitants of Birmingham, or Cardiff, or Ulster were to aspire to independence. Would that be sufficient reason for the Queen's Government to abdicate its authority without further ado? Simply to ask the question is to realise its absurdity. A government's title to rule cannot simply depend on a plebiscite. At a given moment, this may go one's way; but plebiscites are shifting sands, and the stability and good order of a society cannot be erected upon them.

It is, of course, true that "plebiscites" and "the right to self-determination" constitute the foundation of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of the United Nations Charter. But these documents surely exemplify all that is most alien to conservative discourse. They proceed from a visionary, radical, levelling impulse. They aspire to

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an international order which simply cannot be established or be made to endure on such contradictory and paradoxical premises. The situation of Central and Eastern Europe between the Wars, and that of much of Asia and Africa after 1945, is a monument to the illusions of Woodrow Wilson, Smuts, Lord Robert Cecil, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In the Falklands conflict, again, the Security Council of the United Nations and "the authority" of its resolutions were much invoked. But the Security Council is no more than a collection of Powers whose votes are not judicial verdicts but expressions of what, for the time being, they conceive to be their interest. To speak as though action against an opponent is justified and made lawful by such votes is no doubt to show deference and obeisance to the Charter. But the Security Council is in no sense an impartial tribunal. In the final analysis, no state will, if it can help it, obey a Security Council resolution which imperils its existence—hence a ruinous gap between the aspirations of the Charter and the actual reality. Through this gap *humbug* insinuates itself—and it is precisely humbug which conservative discourse ought to be at pains to root out and banish.

I

I is the biggest word
in the English language—
some people yawn bored
as soon as you mention it.

I know people who erect crosses
made from it
and then refuse to carry them.

I know people who build extensions
on to it and call
those extensions their children.

I know people who would
like to keep changing it
every week like fashionable clothing.

I know people who hate it so much
it's become an obsession,
like a priest always ranting against sin.

In English, "I" begins the sentence:
the other words queue up behind it
waiting for their instructions.

You must write "I" with a capital letter
but "we" with a small one.
Why? . . . Well . . . as in God and Great Britain.

i know a person who tries to make it
mock itself, to disguise an ambition.
i know a person who thinks it will outlive
the exploring body, the inflated mind.

Mike Jenkins

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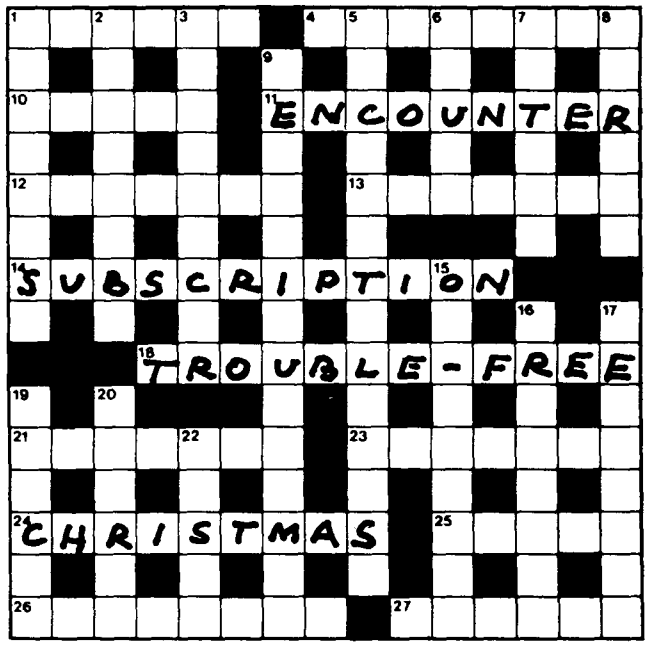

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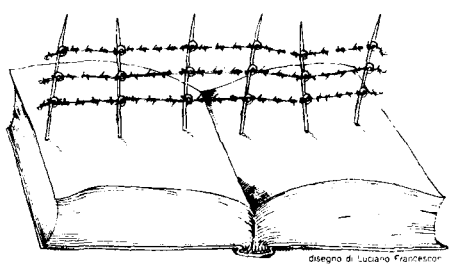
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Belgrade

Tito Debunked

By Paul Lendvai



Belgrade

IT IS probably the longest, most expensive, and most controversial book that has appeared in post-War Yugoslavia, but its title is very modest: *New Contributions to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito*. . . . Its author is the now 68-year-old Partisan comrade of the late Marshal, Vladimir Dedijer, who as a matter of fact was the author of an earlier and authorised biography—but this one is anything but an approved official account of Tito's life and times and as such has been making headlines, stirring up controversies, and causing (in Munich, in the house of his German publisher) mysterious explosions.

Its launching was almost deceptive. It came with advance praise, and was indeed serialised in advance of publication in various daily and weekly newspapers; but then the storm broke. The offensive came from a host of official Party historians, from representatives of the War Veterans, from old former Partisan officers, and last but not least influential politicians (including the leading figure in Croatia, Vladimir Bakaric). For all of them this was an unspeakable exercise in "political pornography", and the author was denounced as a falsifier of history and a cheap hack on the hunt for best-selling sensations. The book was officially banned from Yugoslav Army libraries. As for the next volumes, which were to cover the period of the struggle against Stalin and thereafter, these are not to be published, or so came the announcement from Dedijer's publishers (*Liburnija* in Reijeka and *Mladost* in Zagreb). The pressures were mounting.

I have now gone through the 1,261 pages (the tome weighs 2,100 grams), and it is certainly massive enough to serve as a bombshell. The exact sources are not always revealed, but there is hardly a tabu subject in post-War Yugoslavian communism that is not touched upon, if not heavily trodden underfoot. Men and events are being continuously exposed, usually with conspicuous relish, on occasion with transparent vindictiveness; much of it would appear to be irrelevant or repetitious, wrapped in vain arrogant asides to the readers. But the readers wanted it all, and were willing to pay 1400 dinar for a copy, 70,000 of which were quickly sold out.

The "revelations" among these thousands of details fall into a number of special areas of interest. Taken together they represent the first basic attempt at "de-Titoisation", even if Dedijer has piously defended himself against his critics by claiming that *they* are really the "anti-Tito" forces. The vast amount of documentation makes a massive correction of the carefully touched-up picture of official Yugoslav history, and certainly demythologises the standard version of the heroic Tito and his loyal and gallant Partisan guerrillas in World War II. In a sense I suppose it is a contribution to the humanisation of history which now includes many of the serious errors and grievous mistakes, a whole host of hesitations and curious political diversions, and indeed the very "private lives" of lusty ideologues who never cared to reconcile Freud with Marx. If Tito remains a hero he must now be seen "with warts and all."

Tito evidently deserted his first family, his Russian wife Pelagiya and their son Zarko, and not too long after his second, Austrian, wife—Hertha Haas, the mother of his second son Miso. For the first time the public has learned of Tito's long affair with his secretary "Zdenka", some 30 years his junior; she was Davorjanke Paunovic, came from eastern Serbia and was a student at Belgrade University. He had met her when she was a youthful courier, and throughout the Partisan war from

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the summer of 1941 onwards she never left his side. She died still very young (at 25, from tuberculosis), and Tito had her buried in the park of the White Castle in the capital.

The fate of the women in Tito's life is, with one significant exception, of no real political importance, even if each case reflects on the stern image of personal puritanism which the Marxist-Leninist ideology affects. The story of Jovanka, Tito's last wife, runs us deep into the local power-politics. According to Dedijer, she was a close collaborator with the powerful Minister of Interior and Vice-President, Alexander Rankovic, who was removed from office in 1966; she helped him install "bugs" in Tito's villas, and she herself collected secret documents (minutes of the Central Committee meetings at Brioni were found concealed in her washing-machine). When Rankovic got into trouble she defended him as only a fellow-Serbian could. Dedijer reports too that she kept a detailed journal, and when she fell into "disgrace" with the Marshal in 1977—because of her "political intrigues"—she managed, with the help of an Asian diplomat in Belgrade, to smuggle the diary out safely to a prospective publisher in the West.

WAS BAKARIC the source of these revelations? Dedijer doesn't say, but Bakaric has been like a tiger in the counter-attack. All filth and garbage, he has been saying; and Dedijer has now been having a real fight on his hands. To be sure Bakaric was throughout most of this time himself a target of "bugs", as was Edvard Kardelj. If there are tapes then one fine day the whole truth will be known: who intrigued and conspired against whom behind the monolithic façade of a yea-saying political structure. But Dedijer warns us against historiographical optimism: the Balkan "plumbers" leave precious little Watergate evidence around, vast quantities of secret documents out of Tito's personal archives and Party and police files have disappeared.

On this subject of "secret tapes" Dedijer writes:

> "Particularly important are the tapes which, with Tito's knowledge, recorded his conversations. One has to ask, however, whether Tito was also taped without his knowledge. If this is the case, such tapes are of great historical importance because in his own house, 'for ears only', Tito spoke most candidly. . . . Talking to Vladimir Bakaric on 8th June 1981 I asked him whether in his opinion Alexander Rankovic had 'bugged' Tito. Bakaric thought that this was true, but that he could not swear to it under oath before a court. Bakaric remarked that he himself had been bugged. In his house, Uzicka Street 16, where he used to stay during his visits to Belgrade, he personally had found a great number of microphones. Edvard Kardelj had complained to Bakaric that he had been bugged since 1947. Kardelj told me that too.
>
> Bakaric remarked that if Tito had been bugged, he supposed that Rankovic had acted in collusion with Jovanka Budisavljevic. I heard from other sources that Jovanka had intervened, asking Tito to stop proceedings against Rankovic and his associates on charges of bugging. On the other hand, Stela (the wife of Kopinic) told me that Jovanka had personally confirmed to her that she and Tito had found a microphone under their bed."

As for the missing papers:

> "In addition to the tapes, there is the question whether Rankovic had instructed one of his subordinates to have a duplicate made of the key to Tito's private safe with the most confidential documents. A person in whom I have confidence (he finished the war as political commissar of one of our famous armies) confirmed to me that such an order had in fact been carried out, but that he did not know who had issued the order. As to whether Rankovic gave a direct order, or whether one of his subordinates did it on his own initiative or on the order of a third party, only time will give the answer."

Jovanka tried her best, or worst: those whom she didn't like in the Party or the Government, she undermined—as, for example, the Ambassador to Moscow, Veljko Micunovic, who has since published his own fascinating memoirs, after having been pensioned off as "anti-Soviet." If only a small part of these intrigues is the way it really was, what a hotbed of Balkan intrigue the Byzantine heritage left here! How superficial were all the press accounts of a "unified leadership", of ideological bonds among comrades who had gone through wartime fire together! Dedijer tells us that the relations between No. 1 and No. 2, Tito and Kardelj, were once so cold and hostile they didn't talk to each other for eight months.

A FURTHER POINT about the "Tito-gate" aspects, for more than mere expletives were deleted. Dedijer writes:

> "I received permission to look through the historical materials in the archives of the Foreign Ministry for the 1945–1954 period. Edvard Kardelj had already complained to me that his associates could not find any important documents in those archives. After some very careful research, I concluded that only documents of technical character were available, and I found out the reason why the archives contain nothing worthwhile for that period. Alexander Rankovic had ordered his subordinates in the

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Foreign Ministry to remove that material. An old partisan friend of mine, Cira Matijasevic, saw how once in one shift four lorries transported those documents to the archives of the secret police. . . ."

But were those documents "lost" or destroyed?

"At Tito's order, the Federal Secretary of Interior (General Franjo Herljevic) placed two documents at my disposal—but the greater part of what I asked for I did not receive, despite all promises."

One other example:

"In June 1945 the Fourth Yugoslav Army withdrew from Trieste. In the second and ninth volumes in the collection of the Military-Historical Institute only the evacuation order issued by General Peko Dapcevic, the commander of the Fourth Army, is listed. There is no order given by Tito, the supreme commander, about evacuating Trieste. General Dapcevic could not have withdrawn from Trieste of his own accord.

I looked through the files of the Military-Historical Institute, the General Staff, and the operations diary of the Fourth Army—but without success. However, the commander of the Fourth Army (and my personal friend), General Dapcevic, told me that he had received such an evacuation order from Tito. It consisted of two parts: in the first, Tito ordered that the Fourth Army should withdraw from Trieste to a certain line within 48 hours, and then it quoted Stalin's telegram to Tito saying that he would not start a Third World War over Trieste. . . ."

This leads Dedijer to conclude:

"It is difficult to say whether this and other documents were destroyed; perhaps the archives are in disorder; in any case they are lost for research. . . . If I calmly reflect about the amount of documents at the disposal of historians about Tito's life and times, then I have to draw a pessimistic balance-sheet: we have very little indeed. . . . Even among the materials for the period up to 1945 many key documents are missing. . . ."

BEHIND most of the stories lies yet another story, for many old Balkan accounts are being settled here. Think of it: Tito, if we are to believe it, served in 1914 in the Austro-Hungarian royal regiment on the southern front and had actually fought against . . . Serbia. Similarly, old lingering resentments against Milovan Djilas can be detected, although Dedijer had stood up for Djilas when he was removed from the Central Committee in 1954. Once he was seen as the first martyr of Yugoslav dissidents. Now he, too, is debunked, humanised, unmasked. The details mount up of the "War crimes" committed by Djilas during the Partisan days, the Montenegran's ruthlessness against political enemies and sometimes against those in his own ranks: executions, hangings, murders. Not that Djilas in some of his recent books—namely, in his remarkably candid memoir, *Wartime* (1977)—hasn't gone himself into these horrific matters; but in Dedijer's account he becomes responsible for almost everything misbegotten in Partisan warfare, for lies and half-truths in propaganda and politics, for the whole school of falsification which was built up around Tito's aura in the post-War years.

STILL, NOT EVERYTHING in history—not even in the Balkans—is a matter of shame and personal guilt, of vendetta and revenge; there are, after all, some large objective considerations, and when Dedijer goes into the new truths about the real course of Yugoslav resistance against Hitler's armies a less melodramatic but politically innovative chapter in rewriting or reconsidering historical events is begun. We know, of course, from Djilas that the account of what Tito was up to—the heroic struggle against the fascist beasts, etc.—was tailored to the propaganda gullibilities of London and New York. Far from being uncompromising guerrillas in the mountains, the Partisans often negotiated with the German occupation authorities.

The new documents which Dedijer presents are very compromising indeed. One records the guidelines for the negotiations which Milovan Djilas, Koca Popovic, and Vlado Velebit followed in order to effect an exchange of prisoners with the German *Wehrmacht*. It included the recognition that the battles between the Germans and the Partisans were often needless, for after all the Yugoslav Liberation Army considered the Chetniks (i.e. the Serbian resistance forces under General Draza Mihailovich) their main enemy. Was it a tactical ruse, or was the political strategy being let out of the bag? In any event, Dedijer found the document in the US National Archives; and its authenticity has been confirmed by Popovic.

Since the mythology of the War years, when the Western Allies opted for Tito (and let Mihailovich fall) because the conventional wisdom of the day had it that ethnic resistance is "reactionary" and only sturdy Communist fighters are reliable and effective partners in the struggle, we have all learned that Balkan realities are slightly more complicated. An essential part of the struggle was the civil war in Yugoslavia for ultimate post-War power between the royal forces under Mihailovich

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and Tito's Bolshevik partisans. The struggle against Hitler often had to wait. Compromising with the Nazis, "negotiating with the Germans", was frequently on the order of the day. No doubt about it, the documentary materials which Dedijer presents will prove a deep shock for many. The mythology is paper-thin. Collaboration with Hitler's occupiers was, after all, the main charge against General Mihailovich, who was tried and executed after the War.

According to Dedijer, following the exchange of German officers captured by the Partisans for imprisoned Communists and Partisan POWs, which was carried out on 5 September 1942, there were regular contacts with German representatives on different fronts concerning the exchange of prisoners. From the National Archives in Washington where the German World War II archives are kept, he has copies of a great many documents about negotiations between Tito's Command and the German military headquarters. Among these is a written protocol about the proposals made by the delegation of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army, dated 11 March 1943, in the town of Vakuf. . . .

> "3. The command of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army holds that
>
> *a*. In the given situation there is no reason for the German Army to carry on the war against the Liberation Army, particularly in view of the position of the enemies and the interests of each side. It would be in their mutual interest if hostilities were to be stopped. In this respect, the German Command and this delegation should present their proposals about possible zones and issues of economic and other interest.
>
> *b*. The National Liberation Army regards the Chetniks as the main enemy."

This document, which has the number NDKW-1088/4, was signed by Milovan Djilas under the name of M. Markovic, by Vladimir Velebit who signed as V. Petrovic, and by Koca Popovic, who signed under his own name.

> "On 28 March 1980 I showed Koca Popovic (after the War he was Chief of the General Staff for eight years and Foreign Minister for twelve) the documents I brought from Washington about the above issues. He knew about them, and he confirmed that they were genuine."

THERE IS at least one other "hot potato" which our relentless author has taken hold of—a Croatian matter. People here are still puzzled over the mysterious failure in July 1941 to free some 90 Communist prisoners from the camp at Kerestinac near Zagreb. Three got away, and some of the other survivors (including the Croatian leader Bakaric) have been trying to pin down the responsibility for what took place. What role did the Comintern agent, Josip Kopinic, play? It would appear to be all as complex and lurid as the plot of an Eric Ambler thriller. It has to do, among many other factors, with the equally mysterious death by his own hand, in prison, of Andrija Hebrang—once leader of the Croatian Communists, and, after the break with Stalin in 1948, exposed as a "Soviet agent." What was he up to when, earlier on (according to the explanation), he had "betrayed" the Party and "collaborated with the *Ustashe*, the Croatian fascists? The Russians must have known what was going on, since their agent Kopinic was keeping them informed. Was this the basis of their blackmailing Hebrang in the years to come? Hebrang could, after all, have played the role of Kadar to Tito's Nagy, calling in 1948 on the help of the Red Army for "brotherly assistance." If so, then why did Tito, despite repeated warnings, keep Hebrang at his side for so many years until the break with Stalin? What game was he playing, or could it be that he was simply uninformed? The science of Marxism–Leninism, its vaunted theory and practice, is not quite infallible.

THIS OPENS UP a whole Pandora's box of ideological-diplomatic questions. The "Balkan" aspects of the relationship between the Russian-controlled Comintern, the instrument of the "father party" in its relations with the world-wide movement, are as devious and appalling as anything else in Stalinist history. The Slovene Josip Kopinic, a high-ranking naval officer, later Admiral in the Soviet Navy, was throughout World War II in the Zagreb underground. He was responsible for keeping radio contact between Stalin and Tito. There are an estimated 6,000 secret messages in the Moscow archives which represent the exchanges between Tito's staff and the Soviet central control. The Croatian Steve Krajacic was also serving the Soviet secret service, and both had been instrumental in paving the way for Tito's coming to power (with Allied support), and both had taken Tito's side in his break with Stalin.

According to Dedijer, the leading Croatian Communists had won some support for their idea of a separate party, independent of the all-Yugoslav organisation. The savage attack today in Croatia from the Party establishment has surely to do with this new reminder of an old heretical tendency towards "Croatianisation." Bakaric, of course, has been the leading figure in the absolute denial of any such deviation. Even the Soviet establishment has been provoked into action, and the Soviet Ambassador in Belgrade has registered

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vigorous protests against Dedijer's book. Needless to say, it has only whetted appetites for the many details about the operations of Soviet secret services and their collaborators among important Yugoslav functionaries. Dedijer reveals the extent to which Stalin's purges involved Yugoslavs (800 Party members, including 25 members of the Central Committee, were liquidated). He adds to that some 200 Yugoslav-Americans, not to mention those countrymen who fell at the hands of the *NKVD* in Spain when they went off to fight Franco. Here Dedijer is telling a story which George Orwell, to his everlasting credit, first broke to an unwilling Left audience with his dissent about what was happening behind the scenes in Catalonia.

By the way, Tito's first wife Pelagiya served out a sentence of twenty years in Siberian camps and jails, and after another ten years of exile was, in 1966, permitted to return to live in Moscow; it was only then that she was able to make indirect contact with Tito through her son Zarko who had been living in Yugoslavia. What a family saga!—not quite like the Forsyte doings in a novel by Galsworthy.

But perhaps readers of Conrad and le Carré would feel more at home among all these revelations. Dedijer describes (and here he says he was an eye-witness) how the Comintern managed to help the Party—a diplomatic courier, carrying a valise with a concealed section stacked with US dollar notes, saved them from financial difficulties, especially when the notes were exchanged at the black market rate. . . .

WILL THE SOURCES for this kind of historical revisionism be available for further incursions against official mythology? And if so, will any of the subsequent volumes see the light of day? Not that Dedijer has up till now been having an easy time of it. This kind of research is thorny, even dangerous. There are many old comrades with great stories to tell and not a few documents hidden away for "a rainy day." Petar Stambolic, the current President of the Yugoslav State Presidential Council, is well known to be a careful and cautious fellow. The aforementioned Kopinic is living in retirement in Pula. Neither wanted to make themselves available for the historian.

It could be that they didn't care for the author's somewhat soiled credentials as an objective and impartial chronicler of all their lives and times. Dedijer's work has many weaknesses, the faults of his own biases and vanities. But he has, grinding whatever axe happens to be on hand, chipped and chopped and hacked away at the statue of Josip Broz Tito. The monument may still be there, but it is no longer recognisable.

London Commentary

Delusions about the Pipeline

By Edward Pearce

THE AMERICANS have not had as bad a press since Suez. "WOUNDED BY A FRIEND" say the tabloid headlines quoting Mrs Thatcher. "THE KILLER" says another headline above a picture of the new US air-force *B-1* plane. The decision to impose sanctions on companies participating in the Soviet pipeline has been everywhere denounced. Pictures of components being made ready for freightage to the Baltic have had an heroic quality unpleasantly reminiscent of the days of Arctic convoys, "Uncle Joe", and the Sword of Stalingrad. How do we come to be treating a deal with the Soviet Union with so much admiring enthusiasm, and the intervention of the US against it as quite so much of an outrage?

Certainly we need the money; and we need the jobs. Any interdict which puts extra people out of work at a rather good company, John Brown Ltd, when we have three-and-a-quarter million unemployed already is hardly going to be popular. Again, for sure, the Americans acted with an impolitic peremptoriness, unwise in a stronger country, extraordinarily risky in one which is so little feared. But when you are through with the bad diplomacy and the need for jobs, the Americans are broadly right and we, just as broadly, wrong.

THERE IS NO POINT in arguing the toss about what precise percentage of energy needs will be met by the Soviet pipeline. To "lies, damned lies and statistics" we should add an ultimate category, "statistics about energy." Anyone who doubts that fact should go back twelve years and look at the gross underestimates made, not wholly inno-

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cently, about oil reserves in the North Sea. Once the pipes have been laid, a dependency will have been started. It will not diminish. Once the Soviet Union is your supplier—given that it is not, and will never be, a simple commercial animal—it will have a political weapon. It is not famous for failing to exploit weapons, political or otherwise. It will also have an income which directly offsets the recurring failure of Socialist agriculture to put bread into the shops and/or the costs of a military-industrial war system which had placed *SS-20* missiles in her western territories before Professor E. P. Thompson took to the road to preach the pure hell of counterbalancing them.

The capacity of the West, especially when (as in the case of Helmut Schmidt) it takes a profoundly self-regarding view of its own sophistication, to be carried in a bundle to the laundry by the Soviets, no longer amazes. It is a round of par 72 on the Yalta golf-links.

Americans stupid, West Europeans good-and-wise, the Soviet Union just-a-partner-in-a-simple-commercial-deal: that is the broad West European view. But so much more is going on without full acknowledgment. A shift is taking place, at least in West Germany (and in other smaller North European countries)—a shift away from the Atlantic Alliance.

Mr Reagan could have the finesse of Talleyrand without being able to stop the fundamental inclination of the West Germans towards comprehensive futility as an ally. There is nobody on the noisy tinkling Left of British politics half so well disposed towards the Soviet Union as Egon Bahr and Herbert Wehner have been (in the sense of *Real-politik*, not ideology).

The West German economy, whatever its immediate problems in a world depression, has been a model to us all. In the same way its trade unions, even if by German standards they are now grumbling a bit, have been angels of enlightened national self-interest. We in Britain, through the Transport & General in its heyday and the National Graphical Association today, can show you men organised with precision for their own destruction. We can also show you Bertie Woosterish clowns in board-rooms, men not fit to administer a box of matches. We still look to the West German economy with envious admiration. The German plant of the same motor manufacturing company producing twice the quantity (with quality unaffected) as its British equivalent, demonstrates what we have known in our hearts since the late 1950s.

If I criticise West Germany, it is as someone with the common British respect for her industry. But as an army the *Bundeswehr* is the military equivalent of British Leyland. Helmut Schmidt, who has been so free with his contempt for the poor clownish Americans, has been the executor of a foreign policy whose largest single plank was friendship with Poland (followed by vast cash-credits of a marshmallow sort) based upon the proclaimed personal "rapport and trust" between Herr Schmidt and Edward Gierek! German foreign policy, so mindlessly nationalistic in the days of Walter Hallstein and his doctrine, is now as mindlessly abject. From the folly of the appalling Hans-Christoph Seebohm making his weekend speeches about the need for "a Germany reunited to the Oder-Neisse line", the Germans lurched, hardly pausing to draw breath, into *Ostpolitik*, the Erfurt and Kassel meetings and a willingness to play mug by accepting the welfare state's social-security responsibilities of the Ulbricht-Honecker régimes, by relieving them of their pensioners and paying those pensions.

In the same way West Germany was the prime victim of the EEC system, chief paymaster to the French, top contributor (even more than Heath-battered Britain) to what Sir Harold Wilson has justly called "a French racket." So, unsurprisingly, she contributes to a racket run by the East German Communists and to another racket run by the Polish Communists. Now she wants us all to join in subsidising the Soviet Union as an energy supplier at credit terms 7–8% below the commercial rate when negotiated.

The Weimar Government, I seem to recall, was bullied by the Prussian Junkers, of whom it was much afraid, into a scheme to throw money at the inefficient tillers of sand in East Prussia. This was known as the *Osthilfe*, and, however rationalised, was given in quavering fear to the strong and needy. Not for one second would I suggest that respect for Soviet ideology plays any part whatever in West German policy. Who needs ideology when you have timidity and an infinite capacity for self-deception? Take the German response to the anti-totalitarian resistance of Polish *Solidarity*. They were quietly appalled. But then *Solidarity*, which is Catholic-Christian, working-class, bloody-minded, and straightforwardly democratic, upset Herr Schmidt's sophisticated understanding with a man thought of by the German Government as Poland's highest hope, the now utterly disgraced Edward Gierek.

I had to listen not long ago to the proprietor of a major West German newspaper telling a gathering, not only that the new partner, General Jaruzelski, was a Polish patriot, but that "he was likely to build a bridge between old-style Communism [whatever that is] and something better. . . ." A large part of the West German establishment accepted what happened on 13 December 1981—the Jaruzelski *putsch*—with audible relief and approval. They are geared to dealing with the

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Communists; they stand in awe of the strong and ruthless; and they will pay whatever it costs. Three Chancellors—Adenauer in his dealings with France, Brandt and Schmidt in theirs with the East, have made West Germany, for all the gleam of its *Wirtschaftswunder*, the sucker of Europe.

And we, the British, have been drawn into this German-constructed folly as sub-contractors. It is all, of course, "America's fault." And as a matter of fact much of it is! The whole nonsense of the pipeline and, for that matter, the drift into short-spooned suppers with the Soviets would not have occurred without that combination of American preoccupation with Asia and the destructive melancholy defeatism which was the mark of Dr Henry Kissinger. Comprehension drifted still further from the essentials in the days when Mr Paul Warnke's friends dominated the State Department and Jimmy Carter was warning against "an inordinate fear of Communism." The pulling-back of West Germany into genuine membership of NATO should have been a major foreign-policy preoccupation for America (and Britain) the day the unhappy and exhausted Willy Brandt was bundled out of the Chancellery.

It seems to have been rather neglected! When Schmidt wanted a stronger US Defence policy he got Jimmy Carter cancelling major new weapons including the bomber which the *Daily Mail*, on its anti-American kick, calls "The Killer." For German folly has its roots in American folly. Egon Bahr, the apostle of cold collaboration with the East, admits that he was once an ardent Cold War opponent of the *Ostzone*, what we all now call "The German Democratic Republic." For when the Berlin Wall went up, John F. Kennedy—despite gaudy words, adoringly repeated by all the courtiers and hangers-on of *Camelot* (and against the advice of General Lucius Clay)—did nothing. And Bahr knew which side he respected. The Soviets had will, character, resolution; they could do the unthinkable. The Americans were all rhetoric, public relations, and indifference.

It is a hard case to answer. America took West Germany for granted as she has frequently taken other allies for granted. So West Germany, more than most, practises the natural diplomacy of the weak: appeasement of the strong. Hence the East German pension bill; hence the Polish affiliation (something encouraged by certain US banks who became irrational lenders to a hopeless and thus all-powerful debtor[1]); hence the pipeline.

WHAT SHOULD America do? My expectation is that after some fire and froth, Mr Shultz will defuse the problem by withdrawing any sanctions which really matter, leaving a few oddments for unconvincing, inconsequential show. This would be worse in its long-term effect than any clumsiness shown in the first sanctions. For strength there is ultimately no substitute. An America which dithered again would instruct frail allies in a sustained course of frailty. But it would be wise to discriminate.

The British only find themselves affected in so far as the spare bits of shrapnel tend to hit us. We are involved in the pipeline as suppliers and are thoroughly annoyed at being handled in a way which involves us in direct loss. Caspar Weinberger had his work cut out over here holding Mrs Thatcher's hand. Since Britain is an ally, and a good one, we are not wildly pleased at suffering *any* loss even though the project is, candidly, a disaster. When the US deals with its allies it will need to discriminate between those who have a shared view of Soviet policy and those who are drifting towards neutrality via self-Finlandisation.

It would seem to me good tactics for the US to be very plain and not a little rough with the West Germans and extremely circumspect with ourselves. Some people require not to be affronted; others need to be reminded of what they have forgotten—that they live different lives from the poor Poles precisely because America has the strength she does. A rough period in US-German relations might be therapeutic. A row with Britain, conscious as we are of having gone further than most of the continental European countries in tying in with the US, would be very foolish. Break the pipeline if you can, we would say, but not over our heads. Go and beat up the other fellow.

It is all very melancholy. The Soviet Union is showing signs of actually getting worse. A big soft-sell was made recently, through the sympathetic bits of the Western media, on the essential moderation and liberalism of Comrade Andropov of the *KGB* (like General Jaruzelski he is a patriot of his own, his native land). If, as one fears, Andropov should take over, with the fearsome General Fedorchuk tucked in behind him, then the erstwhile Ambassador to Budapest (1956–57!) will have come a long way. One recalls all sorts of voices in the West speaking then, as they did twelve years later, of the "folly" of the Soviets for having acted, for showing naked strength. But single-minded aggression rarely fails. We should be such fools. There are demonstrations here in Britain against the *possibility* of our owning bacteriological or chemical weapons. We now have from a Soviet defector, Anatol Sakharov, a serving soldier in Afghanistan, all the confirmation we need that the Soviets are *using* such weapons and using them most bloodily.

[1] One financial reporter notes that "the revealed incompetence of bankers has at least produced a clutch of new jokes." One is relevant here (*Sunday Telegraph*, 12 September):

"Two Americans are talking together. 'First, I'll give you the bad news', says one. 'Chase Manhattan is merging with the Polish National Bank. Now the good news—the Poles are going to run the operation'. . . ."

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If the American government can iron out that row which they don't need to have, with the British, and indeed the French, they should make life as hard as they can for the present faltering German Government, for the equally feeble German Opposition (waiting worriedly in the wings), and for the German banks. For they have on their hands a nominal ally turning, by imperceptible, voluntary degrees (to wide "liberal" applause), into a Soviet dependency—a Grand Duchy of West Germany, 19th-century Finnish style, a country within the great old Bear's sphere of influence. The British in their unwisdom (and traditional tradesmen's preoccupation) are tentatively coupled into this nonsense by the pipeline contracts. But the interests of everyone lie in detachment, in decoupling us from the folly which the Eastward-looking Germans have blandly brought upon themselves. Mr Reagan started a row and got himself roundly patronised by the usual fools. What he needs to do is to have his ministers move in Europe to impress upon allies the understanding that America's latest moves are not a caprice but a touch of that singularity of purpose which excites so much cringing respect when it is shown by the other side.

Thoughts on a Tune

By Frank Barber

London

IT MUST HAVE BEEN quite a little dust-up at the Schoolteachers' Disco-dance on the eve of the annual conference of their union. The quarter-of-a-million members of the National Union of Teachers are, on the whole, sober-minded and properly dedicated to the well-being and enlightenment of their pupils; though, in these times, they do find themselves on occasion being represented in public by someone or other who appears to be less concerned with the classroom than with the class struggle.

At all events, when the eve-of-conference dance was drawing to a close in the seaside town of Scarborough, instead of the dreamy strains of the last waltz, the dancers were treated to a rousing patriotic march. Something like pandemonium seems to have broken out. A group of angry young teachers stormed up to the disc jockey and demanded that he silence the abomination right away. He refused. The March continued amid uproar. "It was," said the union spokesman, "totally tactless to spoil everything by playing that tune!"

Now I'm sure that for a great many readers it will not be necessary to mention that the offending piece of music was Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March in D*—the flag-waver's anthem, *Land of Hope and Glory*. It is, after all, well known for its ability to drive intellectuals of advanced views into paroxysms of blind rage. Not so very long ago a Surrey clergyman was writing to the newspapers demanding a ban on the playing of the tune in the Albert Hall in London. It has been ridiculed and parodied repeatedly. One version begins:

Land of Soap and Water . . . .

There have been many other stirring patriotic songs, but this one has somehow survived, defeating censorious English clerics and young Midlands schoolteachers in jeans, to be sung and played long after the Empire it glorifies has vanished and the England for which it was composed has changed out of all recognition. It is better known to most people than *The Red Flag* (originally the German Christmas song *O Tannenbaum!*) or *The Internationale*, and it certainly arouses passionate feelings in a way that is hard to explain.

It was composed at the beginning of this century when Elgar thought the English needed cheering up after the South African War. But it was Arthur Benson, a now-forgotten poet and educationist, who put the words to the music. It is said that when King Edward the Seventh first heard the march played, he removed the cigar from his mouth and said: "That tune will go round the world. . . ."

For all its notoriety as an expression of patriotic bellicosity, its first lines actually express a then commonly held and, even today, by no means extravagant view—once vigorously articulated by John Bright, the radical 19th-century reformer and the man who secured the admission of Jews to the British Parliament. It was Bright who said that Britain was "the Mother of Parliaments", that by her example and her role in affairs, Britain had given the modern world the notion of a stable democracy sustained by a party in government and a loyal opposition. So we have:

Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free. . . .

To be sure, the next line brings us perilously close to Cecil Rhodes, who used to tell his friends in Southern Africa that to be born an Englishman was to win the first prize in the lottery of life. So:

How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee. . . .

But it is what follows that often raises blood pressures:

Wider still and wider, shall thy bounds be set,
God who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet . . . .

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Well, as we all know by now, that was one prayer that went unanswered: two World Wars saw to that. And in fact it is the very act of listening to the words and music echoing across the vast gulf of those two wars that helps to generate a powerful emotional impact. The sentiments expressed were so manifestly genuinely felt: Britain was a powerful nation; it was politically virtuous, and, most of all, it was conscious that its good fortune was bestowed by Almighty God. Everybody believed it, even people of "advanced views" (as they were called at the time). Later they could become socialists, in the manner of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, who didn't believe in welfare payments for the sick and unemployed because they would, in their words, encourage a "disinclination to work."

In general, however, socialists took strongly against this piece of music. It was bombastic, militaristic, chauvinistic, and worse. Never mind that England at the turn of the century was actually less bombastic and militaristic than some other European nations, notably the Kaiser's Germany, where you had to step off the pavement to allow a Prussian officer to pass. Still, even if soldiers were generally held in low regard in England, it was a country which affected to disapprove of militarism while managing to conquer a quarter of the globe. Yet it is true: the English are not militaristic, though they can on occasion be warlike. There is a difference, for one is show and the other is action.

BUT, AS I SAY, it is those two World Wars which have altered our perceptions and values. Before 1914, war was universally accepted among the nations of the world as a well-nigh inevitable means of settling disputes. It was a generally understood truth that there came a moment when pleasant talk and friendly gestures would not work. If you came upon a burglar in your home you did not immediately offer to share your wealth with him; you called the police. After the carnage of the First World War, however, this piece of common sense was too uncomfortable to contemplate. People began to argue that wars were caused by the stupidity of old politicians, or by the greed of finance-capitalism, or the deviousness of secret diplomacy. But then a new generation of aggressors appeared, the Hitlers and Mussolinis who said that this-or-that bit-of-land really belonged to them. In the 1930s it seemed that scarcely an Easter or a Whitsuntide holiday could pass without a dictator sending his army in to seize a piece of territory. The liberal democracies had to rearm themselves to fight another war, or choose to go under.

The two World Wars changed the map of Europe, and indeed of much of the world. A hundred and more newly-created states entered the international arena, each fully kitted out with a president, flag, national airline, and a set of grievances. Europe ceased to be a continent of emigration and became one of immigration, as the booming industries of the affluent society drew workers from the Third World. England, that England of tea-rooms and cockles and mussels became an England of chow mein, kebab, moussaka and curry, as the cafés of the immigrants, direct legacies of Empire, changed the face of the High Street.

I have spoken of England and "the English", because it is they who have taken the impact of these changes, as they have done for not so far short of two thousand years, since the Saxons, Jutes, Norsemen and Vikings became the none-too-welcome immigrants—or "ethnic minorities", as they would be called today—after our Roman masters departed. The Celtic fringes of these islands—Scotland, Wales, Ireland—have remained largely unaffected by the successive waves of immigration and have retained a sense of national and racial individuality wholly lost to the English. Yet it is the English who have been seen as the true chauvinists.

Dear Land of Hope, thy hope is crowned, God
make thee mightier yet!
On Sov'ran brows, beloved, renowned, once more
thy crown is set.
Thine equal laws, by Freedom gained, have ruled
thee well and long;
By Freedom gained, by Truth maintained, Thine
Empire shall be strong.

There is a paradox here I'll not even try to explain.

But I do place on record a small fact concerning the season of promenade concerts which takes place each year in the Albert Hall. They are relaxed, unstuffy affairs, much favoured by the young. And on the last concert of the season, the whole audience joins in singing . . . Elgar's *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Thy fame is ancient as the days, as Ocean large
and wide;
A pride that dares, and heeds not praise, a stern
and silent pride;
Not that false joy that dreams content with what
our sires have won;
The blood a hero sire hath spent still nerves a hero
son.

And it really is soul-stirring to listen to. I suspect it is that which is the cause of the trouble. As the Rev. Rowland Hill used to say: Why should the devil have all the good tunes?

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Specific Roots

New Light on Hardy—By ROBERT GITTINGS

MICHAEL MILLGATE STARTS with certain advantages over all previous writers about Hardy. He has been allowed access to a number of private collections of Hardy material, of very considerable size and value, virtually unknown to other biographers. Chief among these are the collections of Richard L. Purdy, and, to a lesser extent, the collection of Frederick B. Adams. To these, and to other smaller private collections, Professor Millgate has added his own meticulous examination of further material in public collections, such as that of the Dorset County Museum, which have already been generally available. It is safe to say that his *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*[1] is based on more evidence, from a greater number of sources, than any other biography of Hardy.

To incorporate the new sources into the fairly well-known story of a long life has called for great skill in organisation. The author has achieved miracles of lucid and logical arrangement, and, with very few exceptions, maintained them to the last page of a book covering the full 87½ years of Hardy's life. It is an impressive feat of immense industry and concentration, and it is interesting to see how this has been enriched, particularly with his largest new source, the very considerable Purdy collection.

This collection has been accumulated over 50 years or more. Perhaps the most welcome result of Millgate's handling of it is that he has at last brought to light, for the general reader, many actual writings by Hardy himself. For example, it now appears, Hardy kept a notebook which he called "Poetical Matter." It seems to have consisted of descriptive observations in prose, which could lead to some sort of literary result in either prose or verse. The Purdy collection contains a photocopy of this notebook (has the original disappeared?—we are not told). We are now given generous extracts, of such quality, and so characteristic of the best of Hardy's writing, that we can only wish the whole notebook were available. Here, for instance, is a note by Hardy entitled "Shines", describing a domestic interior scene when he and his wife Emma were living in a rented house at Tooting in January 1879.

> "In the study firelight a red glow is on the polished sides & arch of the grate: firebrick back red hot: the polish of fireirons shines; underside of mantel reddened: also a shine on the leg of the table, & the ashes under the grate, lit from above like a torrid clime. Faint daylight of a lilac colour almost powerless in the room. Candle behind a screen is reflected in the glass of the window, falling whitely on book, & on E's face & hand, a large shade of her head being on wall & ceiling. Light shines through the loose hair about her temples, and reaches the skin as sunlight through a brake."

Though this word-picture did not, so far as one knows, result in poetry it reminds one that Hardy had given an early novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the subtitle *A Rural Painting of the Dutch School*, and how much his conscious study of painting was used in his prose—for instance, in *Desperate Remedies*, his hearth fire "giving to every grain and tumour in the paving a long shadow" on the cottage's red-brick floor.

Similarly, in 1888, he jotted down in this notebook a realistic description of villagers "as they appeared to me when a child", which is now printed for the first time.

> "Susan Sq—, & Newnt (e.g. leaning & singing at harvest-supper) their simple husbands: Newnt's lovers; Ben B's wife & her lover, & her hypocrisy; T. Fuller—the schoolmaster, far above his position in education, but a drunkard .... Also Walt, Betsy, & Eliza. The school kept by latter, & their chars, sensuous, lewd, & careless, as visible even to me at that time—all incarnadined by passion & youth—obscuring the wrinkles, creases, & cracks of life as then lived."

In the same year, he began to write *Tess*; and he remarked to William Rothenstein that if he had shown villagers as they really were, the public would never have stood it. Yet the picture of villagers coming home from the dance near Cran-

[1] *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*. By MICHAEL MILLGATE. Random House, $25.00. Oxford University Press, £15.

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borne Chase, which leads to Tess's downfall, is strikingly similar to this original sketch in the "Poetical Matter" notebook. The same notebook records a piece of minute idyllic observation at night in the market town of Blandford Forum, a poem in itself.

> "Night on the bridge at the bottom of the town. Light shines from a window across the stream; the surface of the stream seen moving on, the little ripples showing. Occasionally an insect of night touched the water just in the spot of light, & was, unknown to himself, as visible as in day."

Nor is this the only notebook now given to the world, in extract, for the first time. Another, headed "Studies, specimens etc." provides, as Millgate writes, "a wonderfully detailed insight into the nature of his early literary enthusiams and the methodicalness with which he set about the business of making himself a poet." Not the least achievement of Millgate's book is to have rescued such passages of Hardy's own writing, and his own accounts of the processes of creation.

ANOTHER MASSIVE section of the Purdy collection gives a set of unique biographical glimpses of Hardy himself. These, gathered 50 or more years ago, are the notes made by Purdy on his conversations with Hardy's widow, his second wife Florence, from the year after Hardy's death, 1929, to the year before her own death, 1936. Of course, these cannot be regarded in the same way as Hardy's own writings, and they call for a different kind of treatment. No one can doubt Florence's own belief in the information she passed on, nor Purdy's proven accuracy in taking it down. On the other hand, as Professor Millgate points out, Florence had a difficult and variable temperament, often swayed by the mood of the moment. This affects one's belief in the information she gives, and means that every piece of it should be tested, as far as possible, objectively against other evidence. For instance, she made so many different statements about when and where she herself first met Hardy that Millgate has had to print them all. All cannot be true, and the one she gave Purdy seems, checked by the evidence of other documentation, to be by far the least likely.

One innocent but humanly understandable tendency of Florence's was concerned with her own past life before she married Hardy. She had been for twelve years a teacher in elementary schools, a profession which, at the beginning of this century, was very lowly regarded. Hence, perhaps, her quite astonishing statement later that life had given her "very little opportunity to have much to do with children", when, in fact, pupils of

Ordeal by Labyrinth

Conversations with Claude-Henri Rocquet

MIRCEA ELIADE

Mircea Eliade scholar, philosopher, and writer has led a life as rich and fascinating as any of his influential ideas. Raised in Romania, Eliade went on to study in Italy and India; to become an apprentice yogin in the Himalayas; to write enormously popular gothic and erotic novels, twice-weekly columns for three of Romania's daily newspapers, and, of course, numerous highly acclaimed works in the history of religions; to act as a cultural attaché in wartime London and teach in post-war Paris and, finally, in Chicago. In this time Eliade also came in contact with many of the most interesting thinkers and personalities of the 20th century: Georges Dumézil, Brancusi, Bachelard, Jung, Cioran, and Ionesco.

Ordeal by Labyrinth presents an intimate and charming picture of this extraordinary man. Claude-Henri Rocquet has elicited from Eliade brief versions of some of his most important theories and a great many interesting judgments. But of equal importance and interest are the philosopher's reflections on the many experiences that have made up his life. One is struck by the richness of his imagination and of his dedication to the world of ideas. The sum result is a total picture of the man and his work. *Translated by Derek Coltman.*

September 1982, £12·25.

A History of Religious Ideas

Volume 2

From Gautama Buddha to the Triumph of Christianity

MIRCEA ELIADE

Translated by Willard R. Trask

August 1982, £17·50.

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hers, still living today, testify to her close personal interest in themselves. Florence was an example of an upwardly-mobile class of person, innocently suppressing what did not fit the picture she had learnt to form of her past.

How, then, should one regard the numberless small but very important details about Hardy, which Florence provided to Purdy, and which form a major part of this new book? Many can be checked, and some have proved wrong. For instance, Hardy in his 80s wrote a pathetic and moving little love-poem entitled "In Her Precincts." In his own personal copy of his Collected Poems of 1923, he identified by name the "Her" as the wife of a local landowner at that time. Florence Hardy, however, suggested in conversation with Purdy that "Her" was a very young woman far back in Hardy's youth. Either she did not know what Hardy himself acknowledged, or she did not think it seemly to Hardy's age to tell the truth.

It would obviously be impossible in a book of this scale to check every fact retailed by Florence about Hardy; yet her statements fifty years ago to Purdy remain the sole source for many of the most remarkable parts of this narrative. For example, showing the strong family influence of Hardy's mother on her four children, who were born in two distinct groups, Hardy and his elder sister Mary in one, and his younger brother and sister much later, Millgate writes:

> "She wanted them never to marry but to live together in pairs, a son with a daughter, and thus maintain throughout life the unity and interdependence of their childhood."

This is an extraordinary statement, rivalling anything in the relationship of D. H. Lawrence and *his* mother. Yet the sole authority quoted is a conversation between Florence and Purdy in 1933, five years after Hardy's death.

The family pride of the Hardys in fact, plays a great part in this new study. Both of Hardy's wives came up against the obstacle of not being "a Hardy born", the family phrase. The shadow of Jemima Hardy lived on after her death to plague even the second Mrs Hardy, who never knew her. According to this book, it formed a reason for some actions by Hardy which to other biographers have seemed almost inexplicable, and which his own close friends found hard to credit. Edward Clodd was disturbed by Hardy's failing for many years to introduce him to his brother and two sisters. It was "a shame", Clodd confided to his own closely-written pocket-diary, that Hardy had not let him "know these good folk earlier. He should be proud of them." The reader may echo this. Yet in Millgate's opinion, "It would have been difficult for Hardy to make Clodd . . . understand that it was precisely because he was so proud of his family, and so devoted to them, that he had previously sought to protect them from the public eye."

In spite of its occasional oddity, there is a consistent thread in this interpretation that makes sense. Hardy's conviction that there was something special about the Hardy family certainly accounts for many traits in him which might seem ungenerous. Pride in family solidarity is something we do not think of so much now, but in former ages it was a real factor in life, especially when reinforced by isolation or loss. Obvious cases are the Brontës; even more the Wordsworths, whose interknit affections agitated the private thoughts of Coleridge, lacking and longing for anything comparable. Even for Keats, the most outgoing and generous of friends, there was one law for his companions, and another for his sister and brothers. Here, perhaps, is an explanation of the central paradox in Hardy's life. He sometimes seems so tender to his fictional characters, so apparently unfeeling to real people. Millgate, following and expanding his excellent *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist*, shows how often characters in the novels come close to members of Hardy's inner family circle. "Hardy's best work tends to have strong and specific roots in his own background and experience." In *Jude the Obscure* he thinks of "Jude's early identification with Sue as deriving validity and force from Hardy's feelings for Mary", his sister. If Millgate had not produced a new, surprise candidate to be the subject of Hardy's early "She, To Him" sonnets, one might be tempted to see sister Mary here too.

HARDY'S POEMS derive a great deal of their effect on us from the intense reality of their personal experience. Just as he would defend an apparently improbable turn in a novel by saying that it could be true to life because it had actually happened to someone close to him, so he seemed to use this as a test of quality in his poems. He would be surprised if reviewers and critics failed to notice a poem, which, he said, described something that had literally happened. He was concerned that the poem "Near Lanivet, 1872" did not attract attention, although it was based exactly on a strange and foreboding experience which had occurred in Cornwall to him and his first wife Emma during their engagement. One of Millgate's strengths is that he seeks out every hint of a relationship, a person, or an incident which may have held the origin of a written work, and while bringing many such things to light has not destroyed the balance of his book.

His story, in fact, is remarkably free from the simple slips which are apt to elude concentration in a large-scale work. There are a very few near the

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beginning of the book. In one, having established in the genealogical table that Hardy's grandmother, Mary Head, was born in 1772, Millgate remarks that "in 1796 . . . she would have been only thirteen or fourteen years old." She would, of course, have been 23 or 24; and since his argument concerns whether at this time she might have had an illegitimate child, it is hardly a trivial point.

The sole error of both judgment and fact seems to me to lie in the account given here of Hardy's first wife Emma. It reverts to the carping impression put forward 40 years ago by Carl J. Weber in his *Hardy of Wessex*, and is the one part of this book which ignores the evidence. It ranges from criticism of her housekeeping, oddly stated—"the parlourmaids were for ever getting married, the cooks leaving for doubtless more appreciative situations"—which is contradicted by evidence from the cooks themselves, culminating in the suggestion that Emma was "mad." This is to ignore the simple medical evidence. Emma had a brother who was a patient in one of the country's leading psychiatric hospitals: hence Hardy's own apprehension that there was "a mad strain" in her family. Yet the careful clinical report from the hospital stresses that there is no sign of insanity in any other members of the family, including, of course, Emma herself. Emma was irritating, pretentious, vain, as many anecdotes reveal; but she also suffered, as her death certificate shows, from an agonising disease, inoperable gallstones. A fairer view of her is surely possible.

Hardy himself spoke more than once of the burst of superb poems to Emma after her death as "an expiation", a fact, strangely omitted here, which suggests he felt he had something to expiate. At the same time, the tone of the whole book, its treatment of Emma apart, is of a measured fairness to all concerned. Hardy moves through these pages of personal detail, intent on his work and all it meant to him, remaining, in an isolation both proud and diffident, somewhat of an enigma. The puzzle of Thomas Hardy was greater even than the puzzle he himself found in Browning. It may largely have been caused by the intense concentration of everything into art, which seems to have left little time or energy for many other forms of feeling.

ONE SENTIMENT was constant in his life, from youth to extreme old age, a wistful longing and tentative dream of women, like the hero of his own novel, *The Well-Beloved*. Two fresh charmers emerge here from his early life, both lady's-maids, and both of whom Hardy is said to have ended by jilting. The lady's-maid was, perhaps, as near as the young Hardy could dare reach to the real lady of his first and now-lost novel, *The Poor Man and The Lady*. As he grew famous, and ascended the social ladder, he met the ladies themselves—and was inevitably attracted. Desmond Hawkins has written a delightful, learned, and human biography of one of these—*Concerning Agnes: Thomas Hardy's "Good Little Pupil."*[2] Agnes Grove, later Lady Grove, met Hardy in 1895, when he was at the height of his fame. He danced with her in a romantic setting, and afterwards claimed to have held her hand, though her own diaries do not say so. From these diaries, Dr Hawkins has extracted with great skill the life of a powerful and attractive woman, from her schooldays to her death, a year or so before Hardy's. It is an aristocrat's real-life story, such as Hardy himself might have included in *A Group of Noble Dames*.

It traces her life from the teenage diary-entries, "Great fun . . . had fun", marriage to a loved but inefficient local landowner (who called her his little pepper-pot), social triumph, and several tragic episodes. Like Emma, Agnes too had a brother in an insane asylum—"they have a relation" was the standard Victorian euphemism—but there is no question of her own superb sanity in an often-difficult life. Her intelligence so much impressed

[2] *Concerning Agnes: Thomas Hardy's "Good Little Pupil."* By DESMOND HAWKINS. Alan Sutton, £7.95.

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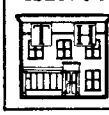

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Hardy that he adopted her as his "good little pupil", encouraging her to develop her talent as a journalist dealing with social matters. Her best-known book, dedicated to Hardy, is *The Social Fetich*, in which she analyses what we should now call U and Non-U in her own time, good-humouredly sending up the middle class, much as the Grossmiths had done in *The Diary of a Nobody*. Her most substantial work, *The Human Woman*, was praised by Hardy as "a series of brilliant essays, which all who favour women's suffrage should be grateful for." She not only commented on the social history of her time; she was a part of it, as Dr Hawkins unobtrusively demonstrates. The great landowners were on the decline, with wages rising, tenancy rents unpaid or reduced. Her father-in-law sold the Romneys and substituted fakes. Her own father, the archaeologist General Pitt-Rivers, was luckier; but for Agnes's class and generation the style of life they obstinately tried to keep up became a battle. "Fun" was gone, in spite of her fighting spirit. Hardy's poem on her death, "Concerning Agnes", ends as an elegy.

There she may rest like some vague goddess, shaped
As out of snow;
Say Aphrodite sleeping; or bedraped
Like Kalupso;
Or Amphitrite stretched on the Mid-sea swell,
Or one of the Nine grown stiff from thought. I cannot tell!

Melting Moments

Puccini & His Critics—By PETER PORTER

PUCCINI is an excellent artist to consider if we want to examine the peculiarities of intellectual taste. He should be given high marks in several areas of aesthetics and morals, but he never receives them: the public's tremendous taste for his operas comes between him and commentators on his music. You can forgive Mozart and Wagner their popularity, though you may want to point out that only a few chosen spirits, yourself included, love and understand them in the right way. How often at Covent Garden one encounters the refined face in the interval explaining to its companion the true significance of what has just been heard. Ah, one says, another of us, a member of the internalised élite.

It is harder to be proprietary like this about Puccini, for a massive directness, very much part of his unashamed professionalism, throws off all attempts at paradox-mongering. W. H. Auden turned the full force of his playful analysis on "Cav and Pag." I doubt that such a scheme would have worked with Puccini. Among the thousands of disparagements of his music I have heard, only one remark seems to upstage Puccini in the true way of the witty sneer. In one of his last dialogues with Robert Craft, Stravinsky, asked what new music he had heard recently, replied:

> "New to me was the *Fanciulla del West*, a remarkably up-to-date TV horse opera with a Marshal Dillon and professional Indians like the lobby Indians in the hotels at Santa Fe. These aborigines are characterised . . . by some ineffectual reminiscences of Debussy, but most of the score is back in the land of *Butterfly*: the opera is really an Eastern western . . . there is one conspicuous success in *Fanciulla*, the attempt to make it American—i.e. simple-minded—by having the gold miners sing in unison and by repeating a Grofé-type trot rhythm to the point of incandescence."

But Stravinsky, probably the least charitable as well as the most acute critic among composers, asks why *Fanciulla* fails, and comes up with this suggestion:

> "Is it the absence of people with whom the composer could identify . . . or the unsuitability of the subject to that genius of sentimentality which in *La Bohème* is so perfectly matched to the dramatic substance and so superbly deployed that even I leave the theatre, when I can get a ticket, humming my lost innocence."

If I were the ghost of Puccini, I'd value this acidic compliment more than the kind words of Schönberg after Puccini visited him in Florence following a concert of *Pierrot Lunaire* in 1923. Schönberg, like Enobarbus, praised any man who praised him. Had Puccini been as unreceptive as the rest of Italy during Schönberg's tour, there would have been no amiable and condescending words from the revolutionary master to the most popular living composer.

Why did I offer Puccini high marks for morality? Not for his emotional, sexual or fiscal deal-

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ings, though these are not as turgid as biographers and other commentators allege—Puccini was a generous man, if a great lover of cash, and his womanising was much less damaging than his lame uxoriousness, which led, in the scandal of his wife's persecution of their maid Doria Manfredi, to the unfortunate girl's death. The real grounds for calling Puccini a moral exemplar lie in his absolute fidelity to his own talent, and his resolve to follow his composing bent wherever it led him, despite fashions and intellectual doubts.

To praise an artist for persisting in his art might seem redundant, but is not really so in our century. The roll-call of Modernists is also a litany of manifestos and factions: the works get written but never come without a nimbus of controversy, an obligatory stiffening of historical necessity. Ever since Wagner, music has been conscious of its own destiny, so much so in the past three decades that the figure of Boulez has become the representative modern composer—arrogant, intellectual, costive, technically adroit and creatively barren. The artist as natural man exploiting native talent has been bent towards either the world of the showman or that of the academy. Britten believed that the rot set in with Beethoven—Fate knocks at the door and the composer becomes the Man of Destiny. The artist as craftsman is sunk in the swirl of *sturm und drang*.

NOTHING IS EVER as clear-cut as this, but when a composer such as Puccini appears—by no means simple-minded but not interested in theorising or teaching—critics and academics are instinctively hostile to him. From surly lad, scion of an impoverished but long-established family of musicians in Lucca, to world-famous composer, whose operas usually achieved a hundred different productions within a few years of their premières, Puccini's life was dedicated to the realisation of his creative gift. He did not find creation easy, and his letters are haunted by neurotic complexities and doubts, but he never retreated into schematic formulae or personal legend-making. His art can be psychoanalysed readily enough, and Mosco Carner's Freudianising of the operas in his book on Puccini[1] remains the best interpretation of the composer's divided and disturbed talent. But, whatever the sado-masochistic emphasis in Puccini's make-up, the works came from him, after long and painful genesis, in true artistic shape. Puccini is the exemplar of the creator who upsets the moralist in most of us, the person whose work is limned and shaped exactly, whose gift

[1] Puccini, by Mosco Carner (Duckworth, 1974, revised edition).

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amounts to genius, but whose subject matter is clouded by unworthy feelings and sordid responses.

Puccini travelled the world, after the first performance of one of his operas, supervising tirelessly each new production, coaching singers, worrying producers and chiding conductors. He took endless pleasure in his own work (it was, after all, the end-product of ceaseless labour: he was not a spontaneous composer) and believed that his duty on earth was to create operas and make sure that they were properly presented to the public of his time. He had none of that other-worldliness which seeks posthumous historical vindication through overreaching. It is fascinating to trace his collaborations with his librettists and to observe him trimming their good ideas down to just what will work in the theatre and not a jot more. Illica and Giacosa suffered at his hands, especially Giacosa, a poet and dramatist of considerable refinement and feeling, but the finished operas prove Puccini right in every case. His are among the best libretti written for the lyric stage, though they are devoid of the visionary and are not generously proportioned.

PUCCINI COULD, of course, miscalculate, but when he did, the mistake was wholesale, as with *Fanciulla del West*. The subject was wrong for him, and no amount of skill in music or libretto could prevent disaster. *Tosca*, on the other hand, is almost spoiled by its perfection. Charles Osborne, in his new study of the operas,[2] compares the subtleties (well, comparative subtleties, given the nature of *fin-de-siècle* theatre) of Sardou's play, so well fitted-out with documentary detail for the sake of an illusionary verisimilitude, with Puccini's opera libretto. The trimming and cutting, the concentration—and its corollary, the instinct for the right moment to expand ("*Vissi d'arte*" in Act Two for instance)—are perfectly managed, but they also contribute to the brutality, vulgarity, and sentimentality of the score. *Tosca* is too successful: Puccini has thrown almost all his humanity away in producing the essence of drama. This is why Joseph Kerman in his book on opera called *Tosca* "a shabby little shocker." I find it hard to like *Tosca*, but easy to admire its uncannily effective organisation.

That Puccini could honour his overriding instinct for form while retaining his humanity is proved by *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Gianni Schicchi*. He had a vein of idealism, at least in its sense of emotion indulged beyond the requirements of drama, but it provided his unhappiest moments, such as the transfiguration at the end of *Suor Angelica*, a curious anticipation of the vision of the dead child in heaven which concludes Britten's *Curlew River*. *Fanciulla del West* and *Il Tabarro* offer the strange spectacle of Puccini's up-to-dateness employed in the wrong cause. He may have been blessed with a craftsman's indifference to aesthetic theorising, but he was too brilliant a professional not to keep a close watch on other men's achievements and to adopt whatever he found useful in their art. Thus the innovations of Debussy, so felinely tasteful as well as technically original, are brilliantly borrowed from in *Fanciulla*. Puccini's ear is wonderful, but, as Stravinsky recognised, his instinct let him down. The Debussy sound just about fits the Californian woods, but runs off the backs of the lumberjacks and Minnie, the Girl of the Golden West.

One is tempted to throw up one's hands in despair at the culture-gulf which permitted Puccini to think David Belasco a significant dramatist until one remembers that Belasco's gimmicky staging of Long's vignette of the geisha who takes her marriage to the American naval officer seriously gave Puccini the chance to invent Butterfly, the most personal and touching of his many forlorn heroines. Osborne again takes us into the workshop, quoting the appalling baby-talk foisted on poor Cio-Cio-San by Belasco and Long. The Italian libretto is mercifully free of this patronising pidgin, and the story of Butterfly's trust and betrayal unfolds without embarrassment. In *Butterfly*, Puccini and Illica and Giacosa even manage to redeem some of Belasco's crudely mechanical *coups-de-théâtre*, making of Butterfly's night-long vigil one of the most sensitive passages in opera. Puccini felt rightly that *Butterfly* was his most original creation, and it remained the one opera in his canon he was always pleased to encounter in later years. That this remarkable work, so original in its shape as well as its sensibility, should be dismissed by snobs as *locus classicus* of sentimental grand opera is another injustice he has had to suffer.

Puccini's agonised pursuit of the right subjects for his operas took him to some weird texts, most of them fortunately abandoned, and misled him occasionally, so that the finished works misfired (*Fanciulla* again, *Edgar*, *La Rondine* and *Suor Angelica*), but it also ensured that he found themes brilliantly suited to his talent (*La Bohème*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Gianni Schicchi*) and enabled him to innovate by instinct, to guess gallantly that opera could extend its range of feeling to accommodate the domestic and exotic at once—as in *Madama Butterfly*. *Butterfly* is a very discrete as well as moving score. The Japanese themes, whiffs of the whole-tone scale and the pentatonic, even *The Star-Spangled Banner*, are not overdone. Puccini's restraint is remarkable: it is very hard to

[2] *The Complete Operas of Puccini*. By CHARLES OSBORNE. Gollancz, £10.95.

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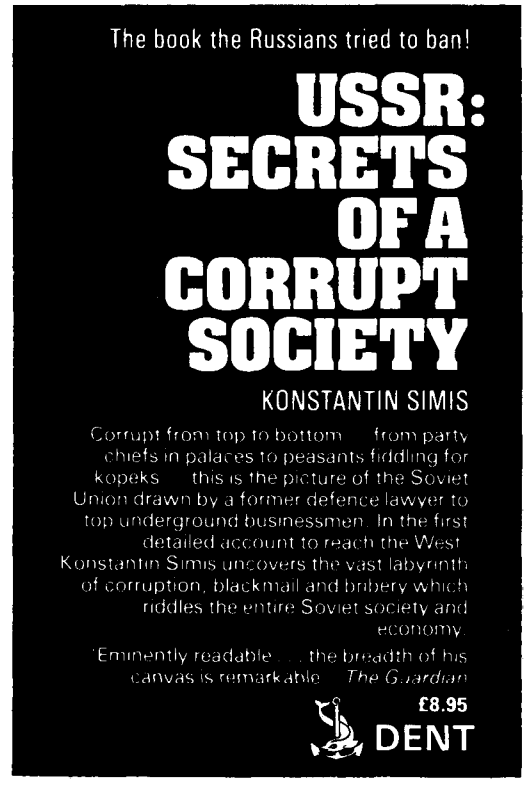
say where the love duet which ends Act One begins and ends, it is so subtly woven into the conversational flow of the music. To my ears, *Butterfly* is *Pelléas et Mélisande* disinfected of Maeterlinck's *art-nouveau* perfumery. Puccini's setting of words is as unrhetorical as Debussy's, but much more natural and warm-blooded. Again, there is an absence of undistributed idealism—Lieutenant Pinkerton is not allowed to be anything but a cad—but this is probably the price Puccini had to pay for the chance to draw so tender yet realistic a portrait of Cio-Cio-San.

PUCCINI'S MUSICAL STYLE is, as everyone agrees, instantly recognisable. (It is strange that composers accused of eclecticism should frequently be so readily identifiable—Britten is another case.) Yet his range is wide. Comparing his two Eastern operas—*Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*—reveals his absolute sense of appropriateness. You could never mistake the sound-world of one for that of the other. Each uses ethnic melodies, but the Chinese tunes in *Turandot* dominate in a way that *Butterfly*'s Japanese wisps of theme do not. *Turandot* is post-Stravinsky, the Stravinsky of *Le Rossignol*, just as *Butterfly* is post-Debussy. (I know that *Pelléas* was first performed in 1902 and *Butterfly* very soon after, in 1904, but Debussy's style had become widely circulated before *Pelléas* entered the repertory.) *Turandot* strikes me as Puccini's greatest opera, though not his most perfect, and it brings to its apogee his genius for imagining a sound-ambience in which extraordinary events can happen. Both Puccini and Stravinsky employ pentatonic tunes with an ear to their maximum exoticism, and with an orchestral virtuosity which adds to the impasto effect, and to the expressionistic distancing. *Turandot*, however, is committed to its world-view, to the bizarre as a believable style, while *Le Rossignol* remains good-taste chinoiserie. *Turandot* is much more for keeps.

Of course, styles were in the air in the first two decades of the 20th century, just as they have always been. We are not surprised when minor composers of the rococo sound like Mozart (J. C. Bach, Myslivicek); only when Haydn resembles his great contemporary, which is very seldom. Thus the opening of *Il Tabarro*, depicting the Seine on which Michele's and Giorgetta's barge is moored, derives from Debussy's *Nuages* in much the same way as the Fisherman's song does at the beginning of *Le Rossignol*. Puccini fulfils Stravinsky's requirement of a wise composer—he knows when to steal and where to find what he wants. He also obeys another of Stravinsky's injunctions: he is "mean" with notes. His scores are certainly richly filled out, but never wastefully. No composer has husbanded his big tunes with greater care for effectiveness, and none in this century has been such a master of *parlando*, of conversational exchange which nevertheless does not fall into the driest sort of recitative. Puccini's timing, almost you might say the tempo of his bloodflow, is exemplary.

Gore Vidal once praised a contemporary by saying that he had never "taught school." Puccini's unwillingness to be a controversialist in matters of art, other than to try to write better operas, extended to a hatred of musical academies. Howard Greenfeld's biography[3] mentions that he several times refused posts in conservatories, even when young and poor. His days of success, testified to by the many pictures of the fat-cat composer, with his waders on, setting out to massacre ducks on Lake Massaciuccoli or in the Maremma, or cigarette hanging from his lip, at the wheel of his speedboat or of one of his powerful cars, came quickly enough, but were preceded by an early manhood of considerable poverty. In the 1880s he even fancied joining his unsuccessful brother in Argentina. But Puccini found backers all his life, from his beginnings in Lucca to the influential patronage of Giulio Ricordi and his publishing

[3] *Puccini: A Biography*. By HOWARD GREENFELD. Hale, £11.50.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house, the operatic dictators of Italy. It is against the background of his slightly *louche* life that one must see his artistic integrity. Nothing—not women, fame, family, or even avarice and idleness—interfered with his vocation. His job was to write operas, and it is something we can all be grateful for that the commercial theatre of his day gave him the chance.

HAVING MIXED artistic matters in with the discussion of Puccini's moral nature, I can more circumspectly refer to his compositions in considering Greenfeld's new biography and Osborne's study of the operas. Greenfeld offers few opinions on the music, though he tries to protect the composer from that scepticism which has, by now, become traditional if not quite automatic. Even Charles Osborne, usually the least priggish of commentators, seems overtaken by Leavisite feelings when writing about Puccini. This chiefly occurs when he considers the appropriateness of tunes being recapitulated in the action of an opera. Osborne has a psychologically simplistic (or perhaps only Germanic) notion of the musical "leitmotif." When discussing the early *Manon Lescaut*, he writes that Puccini was never to become a great musical dramatist, and does so à propos Puccini's quotation of the Act Two minuet at Manon's death scene. This seems to him inappropriate, though one can think of many reasons, to do with dramatic irony, why equally it might seem moving.

In truth, the whole question of the appearance of leitmotifs, in whatever dress, needs a proper airing. I have never been won over by the explanations offered of the profundity of Wagner's use of his many labelled tunes. I remember one didactic libretto, issued with a recording of *Das Rheingold*, which had the important themes printed and labelled on four extended surrounding leaves which folded out from the landscape-shaped text, itself coded at the margin with the name of the appropriate theme or themes. Thus we were invited to help our ears pick up the references, and presumably follow the dramatic pulse the better. But in practice the recurrence of themes in music—and this includes opera and music drama—owes as much to the process of sheerly musical development as it does to dramatic action. Despite the promulgation of that mysterious thing, "continuous melody', all music known to me relies, to an extent which is not paralleled in literature or the plastic arts, on repetition. In *Idomeneo* Mozart employs a couple of themes as leitmotifs. Commentators assert that this is a primitive use of the technique, but all subsequent similar uses offer no advance on Mozart's. They are merely more numerous or more thoroughgoing. Puccini thunders out tunes at high points in a way which makes the more sophisticated wince, but so does Bizet at the end of *Carmen*, and so do Wagner and Strauss. It is left to one's ear to determine the effectiveness in each case.

Osborne's dislike of Puccini's overt use of clinching melodies is symptomatic of a temperamental alienation from his work. This is to be deplored the more because, in general, he is a fair and illuminating expounder—he takes great trouble to place each opera in the dramatic world it belongs to, and examines Puccini's equivocal relationship with the legitimate theatre of his time. I suspect that he cannot forgive Puccini for not being Verdi.

Puccini's feelings about his great predecessor were mixed—partly "strike the father dead" and partly a preference for German music. The poor boy who walked from Lucca to Pisa to hear *Aida* when it set out on its conquest of the Italian theatres grew up to admire little more in the Verdian canon than *Falstaff*. His devotion was given to *Parsifal*. Certainly, Puccini lacked Verdi's natural high-mindedness. He worked on a lower level of invention. But he was often a more perfect artist than Verdi and he was almost always more economical. Verdi was elemental and had a cornucopian gift of melody. However, no Verdi opera has that Mozartian rightness of lineaments and style which *La Bohème* possesses. No wonder Stravinsky, the great composer most in need of innocence, could do no more than wisecrack about it. Puccini's libretti, too, are models which Verdi might have hoped to find. The sprawl of *La Forza del Destino* would have been unacceptable to Puccini, but the greatness of some of its moments was also beyond him.

HOWARD GREENFELD promises a more thorough biography than any before and states that he will make use of the full scope of Puccini's letters, especially those he wrote to his London confidante, Sybil Seligman. However, his book is no more than a sympathetic journalistic potboiler. It covers all the ground, especially the long-drawn-out Doria scandal and Puccini's affair with the Turin legal lady known as Corinna, which led to his receiving many heavyweight paternalistic rebukes from Ricordi, but the interested reader will gain more insight into the composer by sticking to Mosco Carner's study, which is both good music criticism and shrewd moral judgment, and by reading as many of Puccini's letters as are available in English translation. Puccini was a fine natural letter-writer. Because he was no intellectual, preferring to spend his leisure hunting or playing cards with Lucchese cronies, it is easy for literary people to overlook the liveliness and certainty of his self-expression. Composers usually

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know enough about writing to say whatever they want to quite unimpeded in their letters. The same ease of expression warns them that they should not try to write their own libretti. Puccini's torturing of his literary collaborators is one of the best known things about him. It cost him endless pain to get what he needed, yet he was never tempted to write his own opera books. He was professional down to the last detail.

Mr Greenfeld takes up one of Mosco Carner's points, which is central to an understanding of Puccini's peculiar psychological make-up. He was brought on heat creatively by the knowledge that a subject was already being worked on by another composer. This peculiar and dangerous form of rivalry caused him to make many enemies and set his friends and collaborators problems of copyright, money or plain fraud. *Manon Lescaut* was written in straight competition with Massenet's opera, and *La Bohème* was only undertaken after Puccini had established that Leoncavallo was already at work on Murger's book. Massenet didn't mind, but Leoncavallo became an enemy for life. Even *Turandot* might be said to have been spurred into existence by Puccini's knowledge that Weber and Busoni had been there before him.

In general, Mr Greenfeld is happier following Puccini down Bond Street, buying British college and regimental ties which he had no right to wear, than he is discussing the music of the operas. His musical expertise is called in question early on when he writes, "the contribution of Lucca to the history of music is minor." This of a small provincial city which produced Boccherini, Barsanti, Geminiani and Catalani, as well as Puccini and his composer forbears!

PUCCINI WILL LONG REMAIN a focus of distaste for the high-minded, but he will continue to provide the staple fare of opera houses (while there are such places, and audiences to go to them), and the shapeliness of his work will still confound those whose dismissal of its content is complète. Comment on his music is superfluous as it is with almost no other composer of similar stature. Of his operas, one says as one does of a machine, "it works." We are so unused in the 20th century to art of this kind that we are embarrassed by it. The "effects", the vulgarity, the sentimentality, and the brutality are the price we have to pay, perhaps. Beautiful machines though they are (equivalents, in a sense, of Puccini's speedboats and high-powered cars), the operas are robust. They do not need the force and sensibility of a Toscanini or a Giulini to make them work.

When I think of Puccini, I like to bring to mind the ramshackle outdoor theatre at Torre del Lago, which runs into the muddy foreshores of Lake Massaciuccoli. Floodlit performances of his operas

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AND ALFRED DOUGLAS
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Edited by Mary Hyde

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are given in his home town in the holiday season; if you arrive in the early afternoon you can pay £1 and be shown over Puccini's villa, with its mausoleum of the family and its crowded memorabilia—shotguns and signed photographs to the fore. Sixty years after his death, the museum still does good business. And when the floodlights come on, provincial standards of productions, a brash orchestra, bawling singers, frogs, cicadas, children, noisy audience and vulgar lake front all fade away. It is Mimi, or Liù or Manon who comes to stay. What is so alive must be great art. It is momentary, of course. The Torre postcard, with the printed melody of "*Tu che di gel sei cinta*" imposed on a Chinese bonnetted beauty, can't bring the vision back. But nor can analytical books account for it. The words of Liù's final aria were written by Puccini himself—"You who are girdled with ice." Puccini could not write the music for Turandot's awakening, but we, his audience, have been melting at his touch ever since.

The World of Henry Kissinger

By Michael Howard

HENRY KISSINGER's second volume[1] takes something over 1,200 pages to cover the eighteen months from February 1973 to August 1974. It is a huge, self-indulgent monster of a book. One suspects that it grew larger with each revision, instead of being judiciously trimmed and pruned into manageable shape. But there is no padding. The immense detail, though often unnecessary, is never irrelevant. The documentation is always subsumed into a narrative which, if sometimes ponderous, is never unreadable. Only a churl would grudge Kissinger his length. For the best part of a decade he was one of the most important, if not the most powerful men in the world; and though we may hope that he will one day once more be given employment commensurate with his talents, he is unlikely to dwell on peaks quite so exalted again. He was plucked from obscurity at the whim of a despot (albeit an elected one) and although his political skills enabled him to survive the fall of his patron, the domestic circumstances that gave him such immense authority are not likely to be recreated. All the more reason why he should write an account in lavish detail of what a less realistic, if not a less modest man might have called "The Years of Power."

Such length has its drawbacks. One must work very hard at this volume to derive from it any sense of shape. It is not that Dr Kissinger does not interpolate at frequent intervals his reflections on the nature of international politics, the problems of international negotiations and the proper objectives for American foreign policy. He does, and very sage they usually are. Nor does he fail to divide his material into coherent sections, so that we can follow separately the course of negotiations with the North Vietnamese, the Russians, the Israelis and the West Europeans, even when they were being carried on, as in a multiple chess game, at the same time. But all these negotiations are given exactly the same weight. A visit to Algiers or Damascus is described in as much detail as one to Moscow or Peking. There is little feel for priorities. As Secretary of State, Kissinger seems to have delegated nothing to his subordinates. Everything received his own meticulous and demanding attention. This absence of shading, one might almost say of balance, makes for a jumble of a book. Perhaps it made for a jumble of a policy as well, in spite of Dr Kissinger's efforts to impose intellectual cohesion on it.

On careful reading, however, the jumble resolves itself into four constituent elements: two central, two regional. The central ones are American relations with the Soviet Union and those with Western Europe. The regional are the negotiations with North Viet Nam (with China in the background) and with Israel and her Arab adversaries. Both of these last are described in a detail that indicates the degree of attention Kissinger himself devoted to them. But these four pillars of US foreign policy rested on a domestic foundation which grew steadily more insecure and ultimately collapsed entirely. It was in February 1973, as Kissinger was switching the focus of his attention from Viet Nam to the Middle East, that in another room in the White House Nixon was receiving his first briefings from John Dean about the growing ramification of the Watergate affair. From then onwards Watergate provided a con-

[1] *Years of Upheaval*. By HENRY KISSINGER. Weidenfeld & Nicolson with Michael Joseph, £15.95; Little, Brown, $24.95.

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tinuous ground base to Kissinger's diplomacy, rising in a crescendo that eventually drowned out with its discords the harmonies that he was trying so hard to create in the outside world.

IF THERE IS a unifying theme in this book, indeed, it is this contrast between the power of the American Presidency abroad and its progressive paralysis at home. (The book might appropriately have been called "The Watergate Years.") But for Watergate, implies Dr Kissinger, everything might have been very different. Watergate distracted the President, who could no longer bring to foreign affairs the sustained attention that had characterised his first term of office. It eroded the credibility of American leadership with both adversaries and allies, who became increasingly sceptical of the will and capacity of the American government to deliver on any of the promises that Dr Kissinger might make. Watergate indeed, as he interestingly explains, gave Kissinger an authority he might not otherwise have possessed. Without the backing of a strong President his position as Presidential Adviser lacked any political muscle; if he was to be effective he had to be given the full power of Secretary of State—something that Nixon did very ungraciously indeed. And once Secretary, he could do very much as he pleased, subject to an unpredictable President occasionally rousing himself from his torpor to take an initiative or make a gesture designed to reassert his authority and gain a little domestic credit.

But Kissinger protests altogether too much about Watergate. It was a negligible factor, for instance, in his failure to settle the Vietnamese imbroglio on the honourable terms for which he had been striving ever since 1969. The basic problem here was that the North Vietnamese were implacable, the American people heartily sick of a war whose object they had never fully understood, and Congress unwilling to provide the military muscle needed to compel Hanoi to stick to its agreements. Nor did Watergate impede Kissinger's sustained and largely successful efforts to sort out the tangle in the Middle East after the Yom Kippur War. In relations with the Soviet Union Watergate was certainly an embarrassment, but one that the Russian leadership did curiously little to exploit. The problem over relations with Moscow did not lie with the Russians, who in their desire to avoid trouble accepted humiliation after humiliation in the Middle East, but with an American public opinion quite unable to appreciate the delicate nuances of Kissinger's *détente* policy. What mattered was not the erosion of Presidential authority through Watergate but Kissinger's inability to manage a Congress that regarded any agreement with Moscow as a sell-out unless it resulted in a clear-cut American victory.

AS FOR EUROPE, the suggestion that Watergate was in any degree responsible for the worsening of transatlantic relations simply will not wash.

With the European allies Kissinger showed, in spite of his excellent personal relations with many of their leaders, an astonishing unsureness of touch. Admittedly they were being more difficult than usual. Italy was wracked by internal difficulties. Willy Brandt was anxiously tending the first shoots of his new *Ostpolitik*, with all its complex implications for domestic as well as foreign policy. Britain and France were adjusting to a new and difficult relationship within the enlarged European Community. The diplomatic circuits were overloaded enough already. It was not a good moment for Kissinger to try to revive the great days of Marshall and Acheson with noble exhortations for rededication to high moral purpose, with anachronistic demands for a new Atlantic Charter.

The whole idea of "A Year of Europe" seemed to most Europeans a pious and pointless irrelevance. It awoke no enthusiasm whatever, and it is a pity that Kissinger's many European friends were too polite to tell him so. Certainly M. Jobert treated poor Dr Kissinger very badly indeed, but his bad behaviour reflected a widespread sense of exasperation among European leaders that the United States should have chosen this moment to demand new commitments and assurances when they would rather have been left alone to sort out their own problems in their own way. It is paradoxical that, whereas Kissinger seemed to so many of his own countrymen to embody the old European diplomacy at its worst, to his European allies he seemed at times the reincarnation of Woodrow Wilson, proclaiming grandiose goals that bore little evident relation to the needs of the moment.

It was all the more regrettable that, after some nine months of bickering over "The Year of Europe", the Alliance should have been tested at its weakest point by the Yom Kippur War. No one showed up very well during that crisis. The Europeans were cantankerous and self-regarding: that is the nature of states, as Dr Kissinger should know better than most. But his expectation that they should passively accept American leadership while Washington and her Israeli clients involved them not just in a damaging conflict with the oil-producing countries but in a confrontation with the Soviet Union arising from an "out-of-area" crisis was oddly unrealistic, and his argument that the United States should have accepted French and British leadership during the Suez crisis of 1956 does not improve his case. Evidently Dr Kissinger's view of the Alliance is a surprisingly romantic one. The argument that its terms did not, and do not, extend to the Middle East he dismisses as "legalistic." But the fact is that the North Atlantic Treaty did not and does not cover the Middle East. There as elsewhere in the world the

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states of the Alliance have divergent interests and perceptions that have to be carefully managed if they are not to conflict. Again it is a paradox that Kissinger, who so impressed such adversaries as the Russians and the Chinese with his acute appreciation of their fears and interests, should have shown such impatience with those of his allies.

THERE WERE in fact two Kissingers. One was the diplomat, immensely intelligent, hard-working, well-briefed, acute in his perceptions, with a capacity for "laying himself alongside" his interlocutor that was almost uncanny. In this capacity he rendered outstanding service to his country and the world. He talked as no other Western statesman had ever talked to Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, skilfully coaxing China out of her self-imposed isolation. He dealt with the Soviet leaders not as alien ideologues but as intelligent adults with whom a substantial area of common interest could be found. He established relations of equal confidence—even of intimacy—with those apparently irreconcilable adversaries Golda Meir of Israel, President Assad of Syria, and President Sadat of Egypt. His descriptions of his negotiations with all these leaders and his reflections on them deserve to become classic guides to diplomatic practice.

But associated with this charming and patient negotiator was Kissinger the demiurge; the intellectual who believed that international politics could not be carried on without some overarching concept, some grand strategy, that all could and must be moulded to some grand design. He complained of the US Foreign Service that it had always seen its role simply

> "as a negotiating instrument, not as a designer of foreign policy, more as solving concrete issues as they arose than as conceiving a strategy and shaping events."

As a critique of a purely passive and reactive policy this is justifiable. The statesman has to anticipate events, not simply respond to them, and must judge how best they can be resolved in the interests of his nation and those of the international community as a whole.

But there are limits beyond which this conceptualising cannot be pressed in so diverse and unpredictable a world. The most valuable contribution that an intellectual can bring to politics is *insight* rather than concepts: an appreciation, based as much on instinct as on analysis, that a situation may be ripe for change, that an adjustment of the accepted framework has become possible and perhaps necessary; an insight to be checked against analysis but rarely deducible from it. It was this kind of insight that enabled Kissinger to react so quickly to the hints and initiatives of others; to pick up the first faint signals that the People's Republic of China might be interested in rejoining the community of nations, to realise what Brezhnev meant when he suggested *détente*, to appreciate the enormous importance of Sadat's first subtle overtures. Kissinger's brilliance, like that of the early Bismarck, lay in discerning and grasping opportunities and following where they led him. He was able to recognise an opportunity when he saw one because he had an instinctive feel for the shape of international politics. It was only when he tried to conceptualise this, to conceive of a "grand strategy" and take bold initiatives in pursuit of it that his efforts ran into the sand.

IT WAS BOTH Kissinger's good fortune and his misfortune that he should have had to conduct the foreign policy of the United States.[2] It was good fortune in that the task gave him such unexampled scope. It was bad, because anyone who has to conduct the foreign affairs of the American people can expect little but trouble. Kissinger has analysed the problem many times, and nowhere better than on p. 239 of this volume:

> "Two schools of thought developed [in the United States]. The liberal approach treated foreign policy as a subdivision of psychiatry; the conservative approach considered it an aspect of theology. Liberals equated relations among states with human relations. They emphasised the virtues of trust and unilateral gestures of goodwill. Conservatives saw in foreign policy a version of the eternal struggle of good with evil, a conflict that recognised no middle ground and could end only with victory. Deterrence ran up against liberal ideology and its emotional evocation of peace in the abstract; coexistence grated on the liturgical anti-communism of the Right."

This is a chronic condition of American politics. Under Richard Nixon it became acute. The conservatives were, as ever, sulky and suspicious. The liberals, determined to deny Nixon and Kissinger any credit for implementing even a policy they approved, attacked *détente* with the Soviet Union as condonation, if not actual cooperation, in the suppression of human rights. The two combined in an unholy alliance under Senator Henry

[2] We may speculate interestingly (as he no doubt often has himself) as to what would have happened had he never left his native Germany but had remained to become Chancellor or at least Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic. On this smaller but no less vital and far more manageable stage, might he not have secured no less significant but perhaps more lasting results?

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"Scoop" Jackson, whose persistent attacks on Kissinger's *détente* policy came close to defeating it. The entire American body politic was still in a feverish condition after Viet Nam, the conservatives resentful and revengeful, the liberals baying for blood; but even if the temperature had been normal it would still have taken exquisite skill and dogged hard work to mobilise opinion behind Kissinger's flexible and imaginative policy.

> "We in the Nixon Administration [he wrote] felt that our challenge was to educate the American people in the balance of power."

It was indeed; but one can only say they chose a very odd way of doing it. What was needed for so daunting a task was a subtle and persistent wooing of Congress, a continual, patient dialogue with the media, and persuasive appeals to grass-roots opinion on the lines of Franklin Roosevelt's campaign to coax America out of its isolation in 1939–41. Instead the Nixon Administration virtually declared war on Congress, alienated the media, and ignored public opinion. As a result Kissinger was able for a few years to conduct foreign policy as if he were a Richelieu or a Kaunitz, responsible only to a monarch whose moods and objectives he perfectly understood. His complaint about Watergate is a revealing one: "It eroded Presidential authority." It certainly did that. But the real trouble was that the President tried to use that authority in a particular way, secretive, arbitrary, absolute; exactly what Kissinger needed for the conduct of an intelligent, if idiosyncratic, foreign policy, but disastrous for the proper functioning of a democratic republic.

KISSINGER RETURNS in this volume to the charge over Cambodia, and takes up much space in rebutting the wild and largely unjust accusations levelled against him by William Shawcross in his book *Sideshow*. But the fact remains that operations in Cambodia, whatever their political or military justification, were carried on largely without the knowledge, and certainly without the consent, of the United States Congress and the American people. In authorising them Kissinger was stretching Presidential authority far beyond acceptable limits, and he has been deservedly excoriated for it.

KISSINGER's Viet Nam policy, however well-meant, was an unrelieved disaster. His European policy was a humiliating flop. In both these theatres he set his sights too high, expecting in the first instance more of his countrymen, in the second more of his allies, than they could reasonably be expected to provide. But his breakthrough to China was historic, and the dialogue he established with the Soviet Union was perhaps the greatest contribution to the normalisation of Superpower relations—one is tempted to say, "to peace"—made by any statesman since the end of the Second World War. It is perhaps no coincidence that in both these cases he was dealing with despotisms whose leaders did not have to reckon with public opinion and who were as coolly calculating of their countries' interests as he was himself. In talking to Brezhnev and to Chou En-lai Kissinger was at home in the 19th-century world he was trying to recreate, the world of Talleyrand and Alexander and Metternich, of Friedrich Gentz and the intelligent manipulation of the balance of power. If only his European and Japanese allies, if only his bloody-minded fellow-countrymen would fit into this pattern, how much more manageable the world would be!

Finally, there was the Middle East. If the situation there over the last eight years has turned desperately sour it is through no fault of Kissinger's. He brilliantly exploited the divisions among the Arab states without alienating any significant one of them. He won Egypt to the side of the West, and eliminated the Soviet Union as a serious actor in the region altogether. He set on foot the process of reconciliation that President Carter was to carry a stage further at Camp David; and if Israel

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has now fallen into the hands of extremists for whom the whole concept of reconciliation is and always has been meaningless, not even a William Shawcross can lay the blame for that at Kissinger's door. If a criticism is to be made, it is that he allowed the Middle East to become an obsession with him. Here Kissinger the diplomat took over almost compulsively. He spent ten days on the Cairo shuttle in January 1974; a further week in the region at the beginning of March; and the entire month of May, over four weeks, was passed commuting between Jerusalem and Damascus. Were the details of the Golan frontier really so important as to warrant quite so much of the personal attention of the US Secretary of State? Or did he find in this intricate filigree work, of which he was such a master-craftsman and which demanded so much patience and concentration, a blessed distraction and escape from the Europeans who had humiliated and his own people who had misunderstood him? Washington in the spring of 1974, with Watergate reaching its climax, was an excellent place not to be. But an aircraft shuttling between Damascus and Jerusalem was hardly the ideal locale for the conduct of American foreign policy—let alone the education of the American people in its more complex realities.

BUT WHEN ALL is said and done, the record is impressive. Like all great public figures Kissinger has had his failures, but they have been the result of misplaced boldness—never of weakness and incompetence. Under his leadership the United States was able to carry on a creative, a constructive and a coherent foreign policy commensurate with its power; a policy not always successful, not always well-judged, but always worthy of respect. History will certainly rank him among the major figures of the late 20th-century: and not only because he will have written so much of it himself.

Private & Public Languages

New Poetry—By ALAN JENKINS

TEN YEARS AGO, in a symposium gathered by *the Review* and grandly titled "The State of Poetry", Peter Redgrove ventured ". . . to me the most encouraging thing in the poetry scene is this relearning and trusting of what used to be called surrealism, but which I think is better called 'erotic fluency' or some better coinage, like a lover's language which is not private. . . ." It is hard to say what exactly "erotic fluency" may mean, since, if we sense obscurely that Redgrove's own poetry has it, we also feel that the term could appropriately be applied to the poems of Mallarmé or Valéry; and we might think that it takes yet another form in the work of a poet as different from them as they are from each other, John Ashbery. And now, to confuse the issue, we have Medbh McGuckian's *The Flower Master*,[1] to remind us that it is by no means an exclusively masculine preserve; to remind us, also, that just as it can be a source of poetic vitality and the most seductive of poetic pleasures, so too it can be the natural corollary of an excessively cultivated languor or worse, feyness.

This is all the more noticeable in Medbh McGuckian's poems wherever her language, though certainly that of a lover, becomes a very private one indeed:

In my first sleep, I see in the glass
The man who washed in a southward stream
Where three lands meet, climbing my plaited ladder,

And just as socially, dropping out of the picture
Into a dream of cowboy boots—
I should tell the bees, my five pointed stars.

The words "sleep" and "dream" alert us to the presence of something beyond "rational" discourse, may even disarm criticism of a rational kind; but if we take as seriously as Redgrove does—and I think we should—his assertion from the same *Review* article that "dreams (material for 'surrealism') have meaning, deep life-meanings, life talking in its own language about itself", we will look in vain for such meanings, or such a language, in those six lines.

"Erotic fluency", if it is anything at all, is a quality of rhythm and, especially, of syntax; it may partake of "the abstract vitality of speech", "the sound of sense" (as Frost defined it, and as many other poets have independently discovered), or it may aspire to the condition of music (as in Mallarmé and Valéry). Frequently the two nourish each other. McGuckian has surely learnt the trick

[1] *The Flower Master*. By MEDBH MCGUCKIAN. Oxford University Press, £4.00.

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of producing syntactical "surprises" from John Ashbery: continuity, ("flow") of sound, discontinuities of sense; sudden changes of grammatical subject and tense, shifts in personal pronoun and the consequent indeterminacy of the speaking voice; startling juxtapositions and ellipses; the subverting of expectations set up by the apparent direction of a sentence; qualifying or elaborating phrases proliferating endlessly. Her cadences can, not surprisingly, sound very like Ashbery's as well.

THE CASE AGAINST a style can be overdone, though, and the real (or greater) difficulty is that the temptations of a particular kind of lushness and inventiveness lead McGuckian into solemnity and rhetorical posturing, which in poem after poem vitiate a potentially powerful and individual angle of vision. Her predominant theme—an experience of femininity and feminine activities which she characterises, with considerable ambivalence, as "womanliness", in which flower-tending and flower-arranging, handicrafts and arts, but also marriage, domesticity and sex all figure—is central enough, God knows, for us to want to hear about it. But in a poem about desire and self-distrust we get "my tenable/Emotions playing largely with themselves"; elsewhere, we have "your piquancy of dreams", "the shattering excretion of the rose", "their fictions hurt us/Gently, like the nudity of rose-beige tea-gowns. . . ." It's possible that McGuckian is too concerned not to hurt us, or to hurt us only gently. Her own hurt and irony flash out every now and then (she admires, for example, the defensiveness of tulips—"It's their independence/Tempts them to this grocery of soul"—and also respects their "bee-dark hearts"), and persuasively so. Too often, there is a generous quilting of literary self-consciousness—"My books sleep, pretending to forget me"; "the study's brick floor where/My poems thicken in the desk" and, most unforgivably, in an otherwise beautiful and disciplined meditation on home-making and the girls painted by Vermeer, "The Flitting" (which won McGuckian the National Poetry Competition three years ago):

I postpone my immortality for my children,
Little rock-roses, cushioned
In long-flowering sea-thrift and metrics. . . .

There may be, behind such lines, the disguised or defended vulnerability of shy intelligence and unencouraged gifts; but the lines themselves strike an unappealing note of the narrowly (and complacently) self-obsessed, almost self-admiring and inviting our admiration. Similarly, it has been claimed that McGuckian's refusal of "conventional" syntax and overtly logical construction signal a rejection of—even a quiet assault on—traditionally masculine discourse and values. Her

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own blurring of edges and impressions, however, her softening and rounding-out of images and statements, are too easily caricatured as "conventionally" feminine, and are sometimes disturbingly close to caricature already. Perhaps intentionally so; but there is too little variety or subtlety of tone in the book for such discriminations to be made with any confidence. Apart from a handful of short, direct poems which move away from obviously "personal" themes—"Gentians", "Fossils", "Power-Cut"—only two poems, both concerned with the ruses and deceptions of portraiture and female identity, "The Seed-Picture" and "The Witchmark", break sufficiently free of the whimsical or the wilfully idiosyncratic to command complete assent. They are stunning poems, and go some way towards justifying the praise and approval—she has been called provocative, original, brilliant—that McGuckian has already received.

To pick up the contrast with Redgrove: is it really that? Redgrove's poems, after all, solicit "the feminine principle"—which McGuckian would find suspect—and submit "masculine" energies to a kind of heroic worship of female properties and propensities; and his work has aptly been called "a kind of inspired domestic science." Should we find all that uncongenial, we can still enjoy his poems for their visionary biologist's attentiveness, their "passionate investigation of nature"—that other continuum, which in Redgrove's poetic world unites the entire chain of creation from the molecular and microscopic to the mountainous. It is this sense of things which gives his work its fluency and excitement, and which he shares with McGuckian to the extent that she sometimes seems to want to lose herself, or her *persona*, in the "dark downward and vegetating kingdom" of plants and flowers. Both show some disregard for expository argument, the linkages of "prose sense", and rely instead on the power of images to see them through.

A REAL CONTRAST with these two poets is the work of E. J. Scovell. *The Space Between*[2] is her first collection since *The River Steamer* of 1956; the intervening 25 years have brought no real changes in Miss Scovell's style or preoccupations; nor does this latest book make any concessions to the prevailing poetic tastes and tendencies of the last two decades. Indeed, the earlier poems here show E. J. Scovell writing not only as though Modernism had never happened, but as though even the Movement poets took too many liberties with "poetic" speech. Or so it would seem, as we come across such inversions as:

Shadowers of college lawns, between
Whose walls of stone deeper the drifts of green
Form than in open fields. . . .

Yet Miss Scovell's is a poetry of decorums, decorums which we quickly come to accept as uniquely hers; its small, scrupulous rituals are enacted in an atmosphere of reverent hush, its careful statements offered tentatively and without the slightest rhetorical fuss—though perhaps not without fussiness. Flowers, again, engage Miss Scovell's attention repeatedly, but they are, after one or two neat stanzas of patient cultivation, apt to bloom into more general epiphanies, often taking a paradoxical turn:

Flower of clear bells, plain in complexity,
It is earth's darkness lights your light for me.
Innocence lost, the long way must become
For man and worlds the shortest path to home.

Apart from this minimal horticulture, Miss Scovell's art is drawn to children (particularly in their moments of greatest vulnerability, asleep or on first waking, or crying) and to the sad or restorative occasions offered by marriage and family life, suffused with tenderness but threatened by the passage of time. Most of all, though, the poems celebrate, again and again, light: while she often veils the world in a "burnish" or haze, the light is occasionally shed on a more solid perception, and on the reality of advancing years:

. . . And still the light
Oblique and tempered is as wonderful as gold,
And the gold brush-strokes of the leaves of Solomon-seal
Sign the garden; all is common; I being old
(And that is common too) this year more dearly feel
The metaphor of autumn painted on the world.

The light is "oblique and tempered", hardly blinding; yet there is a double poignancy in the affection with which the "metaphor of autumn" is caught, or the mind is caught in the act of seeing and feeling it. The family group in "Figures in a Photograph" are ultimately seen as figures on a ground of light-effects:

. . . their humanity has changed the fall
Of light through clouds to bright, theatric, frail—
Frail as their moment's attention . . . .

For all the so-vulnerable, so-touching "humanity", the second line is the most striking in the poem, Miss Scovell prints here a poem called "Agnostic", but "In the Basement Room" is both a declaration of faith (cunningly disguised as a disclaimer of it) and a prayer:

If I held any creed, at this time I would pray

[2] *The Space Between*. By E. J. SCOVELL. Secker & Warburg, £4.95.

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To whatever light might mean in my faith's imagery:
"Do not forsake us now. Such as we are, we are
—Translucent or reflecting—your best lovers here;
We only, apt for incandescence when you come
To your neglected garden, to your basement room."

The phrasing—"Apt for incandescence"—is almost too perfect. Faced with such a benevolent vision, such tact in the rendering of it, our only reservation can be that there is here an *excess* of tact, of delicacy. "Agnostic" hesitates towards this, almost a ringing proclamation on Miss Scovell's terms:

So where deepest silence lies
Gathered to pools, my steps will draw;
The speechless child that sleeps or cries;
Age with the secret, not the power;
The look of utterance on the silent flower;

and one of the "Garden Sonnets" affirms, ". . . the red of the flower is a well of reticence." But with all this insistence on reticence, on silence, speechlessness, the *look* of utterance rather than the thing itself, it is hard always to be absolutely certain that such impeccable restraint withholds or controls strength of feeling, and does not merely pore fastidiously over a methodical cautiousness in the face of it.

Miss Scovell has unquestionably written some fine and moving poems in this manner, but we are, perhaps, more astonished than we should be by moments of lyric intensity, in "Song for a Ghost"

When or where I cannot guess,
I lost my life in the deep grass
Between youth and middle age,
Not with pain and consciousness
But like a brooch dropped from a dress

or in some of the translations from Pascoli; or by scenes that are sharply observed and firmly evoked ("Two Visits to a Hillside", "The Cross-Country Journey", "The Pensioner"). She writes, and clearly believes, " 'Pretty' is lighter than a feather/ And moves through flowers like natural weather . . . But 'beautiful' is heavier altogether/And lays on lives that should be free/ Our love charged with mortality." These last-mentioned poems are definitely beautiful, where too many others are merely pretty. Coming across cadences that (however faintly) recall the chimes of Patience Strong, we can regret so much "lightness", feeling the lack of more poems that are "heavier altogether", or poems such as "Alloway's Guides" with its narrative verve, robust emblematic touches, and wholly benign echoes of John Crowe Ransom:

He closed his book and told this tale to me,
I tell again for what I found it worth:
In love with space, in love with stringency
Alloway journeyed to the ends of the earth.

In the bloom of empire and exploration
He climbed unclimbed mountains and traversed ranges
Doubtfully mapped, and he crossed the central Asian
Desert, in love with extremity and strangeness.

MISS SCOVELL'S POETRY—a jacket-note detailing travels to Brazil, Panama and the West Indies notwithstanding—gives the impression of a profound rootedness, of many years spent observing aspects of the same minutiae from within deliberately chosen confines. George MacBeth's new collection, *Poems from Oby*,[3] has something of the same feeling, but it is willed, the fruit of purposeful and strenuous labours. For the book is prefaced by a note which briefly recounts MacBeth's decision to put down roots, in a rectory "with two and a half acres of weed and woodland", in the parish of Oby in Norfolk; states his conviction that the poems show "more optimism than usual, surprising perhaps in a poet approach-

[3] *Poems from Oby*. By GEORGE MACBETH. Secker & Warburg, £4.00.

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ing fifty"; and attributes this to "the luck of settlement, finding a piece of land to feel secure on, and someone to live there with." Finally the poems themselves (many of their themes and tones, particularly that of a man justly pleased with himself and his good fortune, the air of a task undertaken and of partial fulfilment, are adumbrated in this foreword) are offered as "a down payment on what is owed."

Such *post facto* declarations of tenor and intent are unusual, and particularly surprising, we might think, from this poet of Machiavellian cunning and closely defended playfulness. Reading the poems prompts a sharper sense of unease, of the reason for MacBeth feeling it necessary to explain not just what he was up to, but *why*: for poem after poem, even as it celebrates once more the goodness of the Great Good Place, worries away at the fact of displacement, unsettledness, old anxieties, old guilts and, most disturbingly, old fantasies—sado-masochistic, masturbatory, grimly humorous and grimly predictable. The foreword is a kind of compensation for the failure to shed the old self once caricatured as "George MacDeath", an attempt to subdue the queasy suspicion that the poems in themselves are *not enough*. Not enough to propitiate the gods of bad luck, or to pacify completely the lurking inner demons; not enough to build on with full confidence in renewal, restoration (of a home and a personality), recompense, redemption. How could they be?

Yet even this awareness can be turned to good account; when it occurs in a poem and not a prose apologia. In "My Parents' Things, the Yielding", MacBeth handles "Buff telegrams, white wedding-cards, a will. . .", all of which hold the charge of some long-lost moment from his parents' lives, and states baldly:

> *I feel pain, where they spill,*
> *And lay them flat, with reverence, in files,*
> *In leaves; but with no twinge of shock.*
> *My time to move, and sieve,*
> *Has come. To settle feeling where it stands.*
> *To garner all my scars, like fruitful moulds.*

There is, though, aside from these fruitful scars, a good deal of gratitude and tenderness: for Lisa, MacBeth's wife (nothing in the book makes such biographical frankness seem inappropriate); for the rooms through which they move in "country ease", as well as the "acreage" in which these stand; for cats and their kittens; for figs that will be preserved as "mounds/Of severed energy", for snowdrops, and for horse chestnuts, which become emblematic, first, of "a kind of rich, hand-crafted rage/For keeping living to some furnished groove,/And more, for being ripe now"; then of "glowing needs,/Their polished rounds, their glittering seeds,/Their purpose to create, and to endure"; ultimately of "The power/That, rising, settles from the tree/And scatters uncupped energies." The words *settled, settle,* are repeated as if for some talismanic virtue—as well they might be, since all these things are threatened from without and within by self-doubt, painful memories of a previous marriage bringing their adult lesson of the three Rs—remorse, regret, recrimination—and by sinister "Spirits" who make "a frenzied sawing" and have MacBeth outside into the night, then back in the kitchen,

> *Beating, you said,*
> *The devil's tattoo, unconsciously,*
> *On the scrubbed pine.*

Many of the poems are written with a certain power and some are persuasive—particularly a group towards the end of the book, "The Owl, in a Kind of Isolation", "Draft for an Ancestor", "The Closet", "The Scapegoat, the Bat." Despite the sombre cadences and heavily pronounced rhythms, the lines broken in order to achieve complex rhyme-schemes, often quite counter to the natural speech movement, the long, halting periods jolting from pause to pause, the correspondingly terse declarative sentences, all MacBeth's formality often serves only to point up unfavourably the parallel formality and self-consciousness of his gestures ("I salute" occurs more than once) and emotional promptings, or to plump out the thinness of some of the poems' pretexts. At one point he launches on a deliberate self-caricature, which is followed immediately by a lurch into an unintended one:

> *At home in Norfolk I report*
> *On life and luck with weary grace*
> *Reading my Cowper with a sort*
> *Of glumly eighteenth century face.*
>
> *Down here in Devon Betjeman*
> *From glossy covers gives me hope*
> *That I might scan like a witty man*
> *And quite forget the way to mope.*

It may be that we are being asked to take it on trust that MacBeth intends this plain-speaking to stand as witness to his humility, a grateful self-abasement before "the luck of settlement." On this reading, the jarring notes make an eloquent statement over and above the statements of the poems, which conspicuously lack eloquence (though they sometimes achieve a rugged nobility): that his good fortune, *what he has got*, are the important things, along with the need to tell of them; that we should attend to what is being said, rather than worry over the way of saying. It may be so. Perhaps we are meant also to take on trust the depth of feeling behind it—this is what MacBeth explicitly asks his wife to do, in the last poem of the book:

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If I should employ
Less obvious words to raise and celebrate

What shouts from every beech and rafter, fine
In Georgian window-squares, and growing dense
In high Victorian mouldings, and the line
Along our outdoor dado, you could sense

My reticence, my indoor hope.

What is new in *Poems from Oby* is this paradoxically vaunted humility before "all that works to keep things here in state." The effort towards an 18th-century "chastity" of diction and dignity of movement (or rather, towards a passable modern equivalent) is familiar from the excellent previous collection, *Poems of Love and Death*. Other pieces here in freer or syllabic forms recall an earlier MacBeth, the poet of "Wasp-Woman"; still others the obliquely discomfiting short dramatic narratives such as "The Return." Most of these strains come together in the best poem of the new book, the sonnet-sequence "Thoughts on a Box of Razors" (cut-throats, picked up cheap at an auction: MacBeth clearly has a knack for finding bargains). These pieces acknowledge, in fact revel in, their own "artificiality", their arrangement of the razors into suggestive patterns; their cool, just-below-the-surface violence and outward serenity, their piety towards the past—the past in which the razors originated, and the poet's wartime youth and personal history—give the poems an edge and gleam, both menacing and attractive.

The sequence is also a meditation on the writing of poetry, and many of its lines cut more than one way: "I thought of Housman's shiver, as he shaved,/And open sorrows that might cut the skin. . . . As it moves,/You feel the irony. It eats and chills":

I need the heft of weight tonight,
The drag of solid iron, like a plough's,

To upheave my brain. Ideas hinge and flee
At the solstice of a poem. They earn space
By how they touch me. Seconds out, I see
The reaching hands of grief, and her blank face.

Formal *and* colloquial, the sequence owns up to elements of MacBeth's work as it has been in the past ("Once you get fantasy, what's left to say?/ You get sheer viciousness, a misty sheen") and establishes a thrilled but edgy poise with regard to the riskier but potentially far richer turn that work and the life on which it so openly feeds have taken:

In this house,
I falter sometimes when I touch your breasts.

I have to try again. To feel things whole,
In all we do, it helps to think of raids,
And live with a Sheffield edge. Wholeness is frail.

IN HIS FOREWORD, MacBeth disavows the "comic and performance and experimental elements" which "diversified" earlier treatment of his central autobiographical themes. It is hard to imagine such self-denial (and self-display) ever seeming worthwhile or in the least desirable to Tom Disch, whose *Burn This*[4] serves up a feast of parody, pastiche and play—but not entirely playfully: his bountiful gifts of ingenuity and invention are pressed into the service of some lively commentary on the nature and function of literature and poetry (a *fin-de-siècle* distinction of which, one suspects, Disch would approve). The book is, in fact, a kind of poet's primer. Disch relishes his mastery of verse technique, and this he displays generously, while recommending in "Ars Poetica": "Don't intrude your own/Views. Become a lens." The poems offer the best, perhaps the only real form of instruction—by demonstration; but they are there for the writing's sake as much as for the lesson's, and almost every demonstration is a delight.

For *hors d'oeuvre* we have "High Purpose in Poetry: A Primer", an extended piece of A. R. Ammons pastiche which reluctantly but remorselessly qualifies its own premise (that "Only one thing is needed: to speak of matters elemental. . . to take the old hurly-burly of the world,/Its cyclones, coral reefs, tarns, and railroad tracks,/ And fold them into a single affirmation, one massive Yes!"). For dessert we get "The Long Poem", which itself digests Wordsworth and Wallace Stevens, Bukowski and Byron, Eliot, Dryden, Ashbery as it goes on its voracious way to this wonderfully "fallen" conclusion:

The long poem begins again
To lift her veil.
We glimpse her face.
Her eyes are sheaves of grain.
Her smile encompasses
All time and space.

[4] *Burn This*. By TOM DISCH. Hutchinson, £7.50.

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Is it possible, still,
In the twentieth century,
To be sublime?
The long poem winks at us
And whispers,
Any time.

Disch knows the seductions that lie beyond that come-on, but he's not about to play fall-guy.

In between there are nodding glances towards Whitman (and many more towards Auden), gentle swipes at Bly and Creeley, a notebook—in six sonnets—of literary enthusiasms and dislikes, a defence of science fiction and the writers of "pulp" novels, and a spirited vindication, "Harold Bloom notwithstanding", of "influence." It is all done wrily, affectionately, and elegantly. And it is no contradiction to suggest that Disch, though he may often remind us of a less rueful Gavin Ewart, also dreams the dreams of a Symbolist; he hankers after a poetry that is self-generating, self-sufficing, and self-delighting. His "Lyric" contains an implicit *Art Poétique* which recalls Verlaine and Gautier; he writes a perfect sestina which has no subject other than the difficulties of writing a sestina; "The Long Poem" concerns nothing so much as itself, the styles it tries on and discards, the time it takes to write and read; and he approves the poet who denies that a unique personal voice is attainable or desirable, saying "He stands in the great tradition/Of dandies and aesthetes."

Of course there is irony, and self-irony, in Disch's stance, as there is in all he writes; but some of the poems are weightier and closer to the heart of what we may feel concerns Disch with the greatest urgency:

There is another world we all imagine where
Our handicaps become the means of grace,
Where acne vanishes from every face,
And the slug-white bodies rise from wrinkled sheets
With cries of joy. . . .

Of course we are proud of our ability to move
At high velocity among our many self-delusions.
We invalids, because we share the terrible
Monotony of childhood, preserve the childlike knack
Of crossing the border into the Luna of our dreams.

Its language by turns "English-English" and very American, Disch's book could be claimed by either nation as its own; but the best verse in *Burn This* is evidence enough of a mid-Atlantic talent for which we should be grateful.

[5] *The Fortunate Traveller*. By DEREK WALCOTT. Faber, £3.95.

MANY OF DISCH'S POEMS have dedications, to names sometimes familiar, sometimes not, to the subjects of their parodies or imitations, but always, one feels, to friends. The poems themselves cannot help but suggest an affable and gregarious personality lurking among the ironies, but the dedications do more than that: they reserve a special place for a chosen few in the workshop to which Disch hands out invitations to the wider circle of unknown readers. Entry to it is both a public and a private affair. Derek Walcott, too, dedicates many of the poems in *The Fortunate Traveller*[5] to, presumably, friends—from Joseph Brodsky to Susan Sontag—but his dedications have an unmistakable air of name-dropping, of bandying cultural credentials. The cultures Walcott evokes on his travels (three sections of them, from "North" to "South", then back "North" again) are many and varied—geographically and historically—and the range of ostensible literary connections or devotions is great. Yet it is clear from the first poem, "Old New England", whose voice it is that exercises the most powerful spell over Walcott:

The hillside is still wounded by the spire
of the white meetinghouse, the Indian trail
trickles down it like the brown blood of the whale
in rowanberries bubbling like the spoor
on logs burnt black as Bibles by hellfire.

The spire, the whale, hellfire—the progression and the terms are Robert Lowell's; the hectic tone, the densely-packed phrases and lunging alliterative lines, all early Lowell as well. The whole is a consummate piece of ventriloquism—except that Lowell would not have sunk to the simplistic equation (massacre of the whale = massacre of the Indian = massacre of civilians in Viet Nam = massacre of the innocents) that Walcott makes here.

When Walcott moves beyond this slavish imitation of the master, his outsider's eye on New York (and, beyond that, on northern Europe) produces some arresting similes ("the canals folded like concertinas"), but his commitment to a hectoring note of naive antipathy persists, along with his commitment to the rhetoric of excess:

I accept my function
as a colonial upstart at the end of an empire. . . .
I can listen to its guttural death-rattle in the shoal
of the legions' withdrawing roar, from the raj,
from the Reich. . . .

It is an appallingly ill-considered passage, which takes poetry into the same linguistic hemisphere as that occupied by the worst journalism. Such verbal laxity, coupled with such crude ideological posturing, gives a double and unintended irony to Walcott's declaration that "I am tired with words."

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There is a great deal of "I" in this collection; it is an "I" steeped in literature, certainly, but undiscriminatingly turning it to its own account, and still reluctant or unable to resist the easy temptations of the ringing assertion delivered by the ringing line: "Something quivers in the blood beyond control—/Something deeper than our transient fevers." There are better moments than this, but not enough of them.

WALCOTT'S "SOUTH"—Greece and its islands, the islands of the Caribbean—is a confection of myth and local colour. The first draws him again into breathtaking lapses of touch:

Beyond the choric gestures of the olive,
gnarled as sea-almonds, over boulders dry
as the calcerous molars of a Cyclops,
past the maniacal frothing of a cave. . . .

The second, allowing him some respite from high themes and the high style, elicits a handful of more memorable perceptions—more memorable because less determined to draw attention to themselves, and to the cloying rhetoric which evokes them. The turmoil of a hurricane paradoxically makes for a persuasive quietness, even serenity, of image and cadence:

Your name fades again in the grounded
flights; there in dark hangars
the mineral patience of cattle—
a cold sweat slides down the silver
hides of the empty planes.

Walcott can write beautifully; perhaps he is able to do so here because the overweening "I", with its susceptibility to a grotesque violence of expression, is almost entirely suppressed.

Unfortunately, he is more often drawn to handling his Mediterranean-Caribbean reality, his love of sea and rock, sea-almond and olive, and his own pained indignation, in long, ambitious narratives or monologues. These veer uncertainly between the jauntiness of the travel-brochure and an attempt at Dantesque intensity ("Hell is a city much like Port of Spain") in their vision of a Third World that is potentially a Paradise—not in the sense of the tour-operator's cliché—but is despoiled and tormented by the usual greeds and corruptions. "The Spoiler's Return" almost creates a persona lively and interesting enough to carry this off—a Caribbean Lazarus, returned from the dead to scour his native Trinidad with invective ("back me up, Martial, Juvenal, Pope"), who speaks in a strange *mélange* of raw dialect and literary "polish."

until all language stinks, and the truth lies,
a mass for maggots and a fete for flies. . . .

The local journalist—
as bland as a green coconut, his manner
routinely tart. . . .

The shark, racing the shadow of the shark
across clear coral rocks, does make them dark—
that is my premonition of the scene
of what passing over this Caribbean. . .
is sharks with shirt-jacs, sharks with well-pressed
fins,
ripping we small fry off with razor grins;
nothing ain't change but colour and attire. . . .

The most ambitious poems, "The Hotel Normandie Pool" (invoking the shade of Ovid and the themes of love, and exile in the forms of foreign travel and divorce) and "The Fortunate Traveller" (an epic narrative of the Third World's economic plight and political confusion) contain some of Walcott's best and worst writing. Against the stark force of this image and the odd authority of its cadence:

still through thin stalks,
the smoking stubble, stalks
grasshopper: third horseman,
the leather-helmed locust.

we have to set

The heart of darkness is not Africa.
The heart of darkness is the core of fire
in the white center of the holocaust.

"I cannot bear to watch the nations crying", says Walcott, and "I found my pity, desperately researching/the origins of history. . . ." Walcott knows—is knowing and ironic about—his own status, and the fact that he is privileged in his literary and imaginative connections, his cultural time-and-space-traveller's freedom. He may be fortunate; his isles are anything but. Shame and rage there are, certainly, to distort this poet's utterance at nearly every turn. The poetry, for him, may well be in the pity; for his readers, the real pity is that he is so given to desperate research.

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From Helsinki to Sofia

Impressions in Eastern Europe—By NORA BELOFF

FOR A VOYAGE OF enquiry into the state of Eastern Europe after the Polish upheavals, Paris was a better launching-pad than London. The French government is more intellectually curious. The links of the *petite entente* evidently survive; and a whole number of East European dissidents, now living in and around the city, are more than willing to provide the private contacts necessary to find out what is happening in police states.

What struck me most about the Paris prelude to my journey was the change in French opinion since I lived there in the days of the Fourth and early Fifth Republic: being pro-Soviet was then virtually synonymous with being "progressive." Now the vast majority of educated people regard the Soviet Union as militarily formidable but socially barbaric. Trade? Certainly, if it favours French interests. Fraternal relations? Only with Russians brave enough to buck the system.

IFRI (the French Institute of International Affairs) invited me to a meeting on the USSR addressed by Cornelius Castoriadis, a specialist on the militarisation of the Soviet ruling apparatus. A packed and picked audience, including representatives from the Presidency and the Quai d'Orsay, as well as leading academics and journalists, participated in the arguments. There were differences about the real role of the Soviet armed forces, but nobody questioned Soviet imperial dynamism. How different, I thought, from our own dear Chatham House, in St James's Square.[1]

THREE YEARS BEFORE, on the Soviet side of the frontier city of Chop, I had been tried and automatically found guilty of the criminal offence of "agitation and propaganda"—as well as "violating the Helsinki Final Act." And so, excluded from the USSR, I decided to start my investigation in Finland, the non-Communist country geographically and economically closest to Moscow.

Welcomed at the airport by a friendly diplomat, I was escorted directly to a penthouse overlooking the busy harbour where *le tout Helsinki* was celebrating the opening of the subsidiary of a well-known American institution, the Citibank. With others waiting in the wings (until then foreign banks had been excluded from Finland), the occasion marked a significant change of policy. "Quite right too!" a Finnish industrialist said to me. "We manufacturers have to compete in the world markets. So why should our bankers be protected?"

The Finns know they are a poor country and must stay internationally competitive: nobody expects "a free lunch." Though much of its industry is publicly owned, the nationalised industries—unlike the British—also have to pay their way. Finnair has always run at a profit, in almost 40 years of existence. "Otherwise", said its Director, "we would just go out of business. . . ."

Two-thirds of Finnish oil comes from the USSR, and anyone who did not know the Finns might expect that even more than Russia's Communist neighbours (who get their oil at subsidised prices) they would have trouble balancing their bilateral clearing accounts. It does not take long to see that the Finns make up for their desperate deficiencies in natural resources (including sunshine) with extra qualities of stamina, involvement, and thrust. Today it is the Russians, not the Finns, who are in deficit. Indeed Finland's trading position with its huge neighbour suggests a kind of "colonialism" in reverse: in broad terms, the USSR provides the raw materials and the Finns the industrial products and know-how.

WHY WAS FINLAND, on the border of the Soviet colossus, spared the fate of the other Baltic Republics? It is the only part of the Czarist empire that the Kremlin has never reclaimed, though the

[1] See my article in *The Times* (19 June 1982), "Golden Chances that Keep Going West."

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Finns were twice in combat with Soviet forces during World War II. In the post-War period Stalin did indeed propose a non-aggression pact, which would have reduced Finland to satellite status. But he accepted a counter-proposal: a treaty that kept Finland out of any anti-Soviet alliance but excluded joint Soviet-Finnish military operations or exercises except by mutual consent. Only once—during the 1961 Berlin crisis—did the Kremlin suggest joint manoeuvres. Khrushchev retracted the proposal when President Kekkonen flew out and asked him to. (Cynical Western diplomats suspect the whole incident was concocted to get Kekkonen re-elected as Finland's national hero who stood up to the Russians.)

One reason for this anomaly, no doubt, is that Helsinki was never occupied. Another, that the Sovietisation of Finland might well have meant the Atlanticisation of neutral Sweden. Perhaps, too, the Soviet privileged classes (I saw many around) cherish the proximity of a well-stocked capitalist city to which they can pop over to do their shopping.

To the West, "Finlandisation" [2] has come to mean grovelling subservience. Finland has no independent foreign policy, and criticism of the Soviet Union is deliberately muted, though the media are uncensored and well-informed. Some young Finns publicly demonstrated in favour of Poland's *Solidarity*; most of the population ingloriously hoped that the Poles would be "reasonable"—that is, settle for rather less liberty than the Finns demand for themselves.

The most serious charge is that the Finns help to police the Soviet frontier: dissidents say there is a double danger in using this escape route. One Finnish official confirmed the existence of such an agreement but argued that with so few Finnish frontier guards it was improbable that anyone attempting to cross would encounter them. Indeed, unless Soviet officers were watching, the Finns would probably be "sympathetic"; many refugees have been hustled through Finland to other Scandinavian countries which can allow themselves to be openly hospitable.

What the Finns *really* think of the Russians they rarely reveal. A Finnish-speaking Western diplomat recalls a fishing excursion when, in the evening, he was astounded to hear the assembled company break into an anti-Soviet war song. One of the more sober participants, noting the presence of a foreigner, called for silence. Others sang on. Blows were exchanged; the Westerner needed all his diplomatic talents to restore the peace.

Such outbursts are rare. The new President, the Social Democrat Mauno Koivista, was not the Soviet Union's first choice but appears to be every bit as deferential as his predecessor. Deference, however, is not subservience.

[2] On this question see the viewpoints of Walter Laqueur, "The Specter of Finlandisation", *Commentary* (December 1977), and Melvin J. Lasky, "From Helsinki to Moscow", ENCOUNTER (August 1979).

East Germany: Militarism, Pacifism & Western Aid

TO TRAVEL from Finland into the East German *DDR* was to enter a world where Moscow imposes not only its power but also its ideology. It seems strange that the Kremlin had returned to the old divine-right-of-kings precept: *Cujus regio ejus religio*. But everywhere, except in Finland, they had. This is the world ruled, Soviet-style, by ageing oligarchs, who, in accordance with Marxist-Leninist precepts, try to keep a grip on all aspects of their peoples' lives. The inevitable corollary, as I had seen in the USSR, is ubiquitous corruption, arbitrary violations of human rights and, by Western standards, painfully retarded economic development.

An invitation to the Leipzig Fair, besides giving me the opportunity to visit the best preserved (and/or reconstructed) of Germany's ancient free cities, entitled me automatically to a visa to East Germany and, if the hotels were full, to private accommodation.

At the press centre, a large room marked "Accommodation" was empty except for several plump ladies, chatting idly behind the counters. (It was the third day of the Fair and presumably most journalists had already been accommodated.) None of them spoke a word of English or French or produced a welcoming smile. But I did negotiate bed-and-breakfast at £12 a night (less than one-eighth of what British businessmen were paying for a small room in the high-rise hotel across the road). The furnishing was conventional, perhaps a shade genteel, so I was startled to see, along the top of an enormous cupboard opposite my bed, dozens of empty bottles each labelled with the trade name of a different alcoholic drink: from pure malt whisky to chemically concocted *apéritifs*. Later I was told that among the *DDR* young, this style of interior decoration is all the rage—could anything be less like "socialist realism"?

I arrived in time to attend the packed reception the British Ambassador was giving in honour of the Fair. "Never", as one guest commented, "have so many businessmen assembled in so small a space to do so little business." On the *DDR* side there was plenty of demand but no hard currency; and although the banks were liberally represented, including Britain's four clearing-houses, they were conspicuously unwilling to lend. One Bradford wool-manufacturer thought, for a giddy moment,

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that he had landed a two-million-pound deal. Unfortunately the order turned out to be conditional on an unobtainable low-interest credit.

The Western participants were unanimous. They had come to Leipzig only because if they did not, and business revived, they might be blacklisted. But there were lots of parties; many of the representatives and reporters were there for the beer.

This was not too long after General Jaruzelski's imposition of Polish martial law, and paradoxically the US Department of Commerce had sponsored a 500-square-metre stand at the Fair in which ten major American corporations were exhibiting the automated instruments they hoped to install in COMECON's processing industries. Yet President Erich Honecker, who went around personally visiting all the stands, had called for repression in Poland even before the Russians. Besides conducting a bitterly anti-Polish campaign, he had closed his frontiers, presumably to preserve his Germans from ideological infection.

Alarmed by the Polish experience, the *DDR* has held down the price of basic commodities (other prices have rocketed) and conceded large pay increases in certain strategic industries. Then, with no quality products on the market, drastic measures were needed to absorb the extra money. One regular visitor to the Fair was told that dressmakers and tailors had recently been instructed to double their charges; the extra receipts would later be taxed away. . . .

Were they not saddled with the innately inefficient Soviet economic system, the East Germans would be much better off than the Finns. Not only have they been receiving heavily subsidised raw materials, including oil from the Soviet Union (the Finns, who are not members of COMECON, do not qualify), but they also get several billion dollars a year from the West German Federal Republic under the provisions of the *Ostpolitik*. These come in various forms of grants, credits, and subsidised Federal products. Yet it was apparent, even at the Leipzig Fair, arranged by and for the East Germans, that the Finns are internationally competitive whereas they are not.

The absence of any real personal responsibility, common to all Communist régimes, seems to have eroded the famous German work ethic. West German industrialists say that refugees from East Germany usually take a long time to adjust their work habits to the required rhythms and regularity.

THE EAST GERMANS have invented a new phrase: *niche Communism*, to describe the way they have adjusted to the Honecker régime. The time and energy saved on regular jobs is redirected to the family nest—and to hours and hours of (West German) television. Western books and newspapers are still banned, although the régime recognises that Western TV has broken their monopoly of information. Fortunately for them, the West German programmes incline to expose the ugly face of capitalism: thuggery, riots, terrorism, pornography, and unemployment. These were certainly the impressions conveyed in the comfortable home of a Communist Party member, mother of two, working like her non-Party husband at Leipzig University, to whom academic friends introduced me. On Poland they accepted the *DDR*-Soviet party line: their friends had gone there and found the Poles "selling Nazi emblems."

Despite higher prices, the young family were doing well out of welfare: generous rewards for procreation are designed to counter the consequences of the post-War mass exodus to the West and the declining birth rate. The wife was enjoying a year off with full pay, and their obligation to repay a state loan, raised when they moved into their own flat, was automatically cancelled with the birth of their second child.

MANY OF THE GERMANS and foreigners I spoke to were beginning to wonder whether—and for how long—the *DDR* would manage to sustain these high welfare benefits. For now, belatedly, the oil crisis has caught up with the East Germans, who find themselves in the unhappy condition of paying more and more for less and less.

One deal, announced in Leipzig a few months later, and already casting a shadow while I was there, was for the delivery in 1982 of only 17.1 million tonnes of oil from the Soviet export organisation *Soyuzneftexport* to the East German state oil refinery—an annual cut of 12%. During the 1970s the *DDR* had increased its import of subsidised Soviet oil every year; in 1980 deliveries were frozen; now they are being radically reduced. At the same time, the Soviet Union is phasing out its subsidies on oil and other raw materials to all the COMECON countries, and gradually bringing prices up to world levels.

In dealing with the new oil shortage, the elderly East German leadership (three of Honecker's closest colleagues fought in the Spanish civil war) is showing signs of frenzy. They have virtually prohibited road transport and so—as I experienced in my travels—imposed appalling strains and delays on their rail system, itself deprived of new engines and carriages which have to be diverted to pay for Soviet deliveries.

One curious side-effect has been a disruption of the book trade. In East Berlin I heard of the frustrations of a writer whose novel should already have been published; the copies were still in a depot in Leipzig. No permit was available for a lorry to carry them to the nearest railway station

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several miles away, and publication had to be indefinitely postponed.

Nor can the East Germans hope to borrow their way out. Western credits, even from the Bonn Federal Republic (on the old principle that "to him that hath shall be given"), are drying up. Further, the *DDR* is required to help out General Jaruzelski and to increase its military contribution to the Warsaw Pact.

Militarisation now affects people in their daily life. While I was there the decision to extend military service to two years was announced; parents said they had been called in and informed that military classes in school were to be made compulsory. Training in the use of weapons—for girls as well as boys—has become a condition for entering University. An East German biologist, travelling home from an international conference, the only occasions for meeting West German colleagues, told me his biggest problem was how to educate his children. Should they be allowed to believe the nonsense they were taught in school and at youth clubs, or would it be better to subject them to the strains of double-talk and deception?

A "PEACE DEMONSTRATION" had taken place in Dresden a few weeks before I arrived. Starting with a service in memory of the victims of the horrific Allied air-raid, it had turned into a spontaneous semi-religious rally "against militarism"—and, by implication, against those who enforce it. In London, the Council of Churches had given me the name of an English-speaking clergyman in West Berlin; when I had phoned from Leipzig to ask advice about whom I should see in Dresden he sharply reminded me that communications to their Church across the border were forbidden. He suggested I consult the local telephone directory.

On my arrival I found Church officials busy preparing for the Synod for the province of Saxony, which was to start the following day. It had still not been determined whether Western visitors would be admitted. (They were not.) The Bishop, Johannes Hempel, excused himself; but I had a long talk with his deputy who was plainly troubled at the worsening relations between Church and State.

Four years before, Prime Minister Honecker had negotiated a *concordat*, perhaps in the Marxist conviction that religion was now only a dying relic. That illusion had been shattered by Poland. The *DDR* had a separate worry: resistance to the new military measures was focusing on their own, supposedly tamed, Lutheran Church. East German conscientious objectors are still conscripted to do their army service in non-combatant units, but the Dresden Church is supporting a pacifist demand for relief from any form of military obligation.

Later I visited the Lutherans in their dilapidated offices in East Berlin. Here they were even more nervous about being involved with potential subversives. I was reminded that the Church's activities depend totally on the goodwill of the State. The cleric who received me was currently authorised to broadcast four quarter-of-an-hour religious radio talks per year (each to be submitted for censorship three weeks in advance): small mercies were better than none. When I visited the British Embassy a few blocks away I found they had no communication with the Lutherans. It was the first—but not the last—time during my tour that I found our Embassies implicitly endorsing the claim of totalitarian states to be the true incarnation of the people.

Czechoslovakia: Havel's Shadow

PERHAPS the *Palace*, where I spent my first night in Prague, may once have deserved its name. The uncouthness of the service (once they discovered I was not in the money-changing business), the stench in the private bathroom, the ricketyness of the furniture, the absence of curtains, all combined to create a general impression of passive resistance against the intrusion of foreigners. The next day I moved into a modern suburban hotel, equally inappropriately called the *Splendid*. Yes, they said, they did have telephones in the rooms. When I moved in I found that one can neither make nor receive outside calls on these phones; they are connected only with the central desk.

I bought myself a city plan and learnt to find my own way on trams (which run all night), buses, and the underground so that I could visit whom I liked without recourse to the rapacious (and police-informing) taxi-drivers.

As I soon found out, conditions have considerably worsened since my last visit four years previously, when I described the Czech experience as "Goulash Communism"[3]—suggesting that the régime was trying to provide consumer goods to buy off dissident political opposition. Now, prices had just been sharply increased (41% for meat, 35% for tobacco), but complaints were mainly over the disappearance of such basic commodities as cabbage, salt, lavatory paper. A Prague lawyer, specialising in cooperative apartments, said that there was a virtual halt on residential building. According to figures from the Czech statistical office, inspectors found 32% of the dwellings completed last year were unfit for human habitation.

[3] "Comecon Blues", *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1978).

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BEFORE THE WAR Czechoslovak products were technically among the best. Now, a frightening percentage of output could find no market at home or abroad. By 1982 it was officially calculated that the volume of unsold goods was only slightly lower than the whole year's national product. How could a country as industrially advanced as Czechoslovakia (and which still preserves one of the finest capital cities in the world) sink to this level?

Part of the answer lies in recent history. In 1948, and again in 1968, many of the most talented people left their native land. After 1969 half a million cadres were eliminated, and subservience became the criteria for promotion. The consequences were plain. According to one report (cited by a Deputy Minister for foreign trade), for the same unit of production the Czechs now require 40% more energy, raw material, and labour than industrially advanced economies. As I saw in my hotel, nobody really cares.

All the Western diplomats that I met agreed that the system of compulsory planning had broken down. The five-year plans and even the annual plan, they were saying, no longer had any relation to reality.

Reforms to raise efficiency have been yet again introduced, this time under the title "New Economic Mechanism"—itself the subject of endless jokes. "What is the new economic mechanism?" "It's quite simple. You take two coal scuttles, one full, the other empty, and pour the coal from one into the other." "Then nothing changes?" "No, but it makes a lot of noise. . . ."

The Polish troubles coincided with the sharp drop in Czech living conditions, and have manifestly frightened the leadership. When he was visiting West Germany, Foreign Minister Bohuslav Chnoupek compared Warsaw in 1980 to Prague in 1968. When he went on to Moscow, he declared: "We consider the struggle for the consolidation of socialism in Poland to be the sharpest front in today's class conflict with imperialism." (This did not spare me from some straight talk from a representative of the Czech National Bank who found it "outrageous" that, because of Polish insolvency, prudent people like the Czechs were being deprived of Western credits. No "sharp front" for him.)

ONE REVEALING PICTURE of life in a Czech factory came from a manual labourer, an intellectual whose opinions had debarred him from his own profession. "Our unemployed take their dole in the factories", he said, pointing out that his own unit in a machine-tool factory employed 40 men where six would have been sufficient. The pre-War premises had never been modernised; lorries were still loaded by hand.

His mates counted on him to listen to the BBC and tell them what was happening in Poland. Two of them, whom he had supposed quite non-political, asked if he would help compose a letter "proposing the BBC for the Nobel prize." None the less, while he was out of the way, all the men were induced to sign a declaration supporting the Jaruzelski coup. When he asked why, they apologetically pointed out that they had to think of their families.

All the signatories of the 1977 "*Freedom Charter*" whom I met agreed that it was "pure lottery" which of them would be picked up by the secret police. Yet there is one whom the Communists obviously hold in special awe: Vaclav Havel, the country's leading playwright, whose satires on the prevailing *mores* have been shown in London and Paris theatres and on TV.[4] Havel has been in prison since 1979. One of his friends, Zdenek Urbanek, told me that a few months ago Havel was refused the normal remission sentence, though he has now been transferred to a different and less lugubrious prison nearer Prague.

The scholarly Urbanek is a Shakespeare specialist. The Prague National Theatre has been forbidden to go on performing his translation of *Hamlet*. During a visit to England he had made a special study of Falstaff, believed by some to be based on a real knight, Sir John Oldcastle: a figure of special interest in this part of Europe as he conducted a correspondence with the Hussites in Bohemia. According to Urbanek, Shakespeare was really writing about the fickleness of kings:

> "If you have lived under censorship, you know that if you want to write about a man who dared defy authority, you had better present him as a clown."

Urbanek is one of nature's incorruptibles, but he confessed that on one occasion he had indeed allowed the censor's blue pencil to tamper with his work. His translation of *Martin Chuzzlewit* appears without, in one Dickensian passage, the offending words ". . . be he Prussian or Russian." Comradely sensibilities in Eastern Europe. . . .

Still under police surveillance, Urbanek regretted that he had lost contact with English culture and Anglo-Saxon intellectuals. "Would it be imprudent for you to visit our Embassy?" "No, that would help—but I've never been invited. . . ."

Hospitality, as the British Embassy confirmed, is confined to régime-approved intellectuals. I was dispirited to learn that when these are dined and wined, at our expense, our diplomats desist from

[4] See, in ENCOUNTER, Vaclav Havel, "The Age of Chicanery: Technical Notes on My House-Arrest" and "Charter 77" (September 1979), and "An Open Letter from Prague" (September 1975).

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reminding them that Czechoslovakia will remain a cultural outcast until Vaclav Havel is freed.

THE ONE REFORM which survived the 1968 upheaval was the federalisation of Czechoslovakia. Despite the continuance of central planning and a centralised party structure, Slovakia, previously the underdeveloped area, has successfully retained a larger share of the political and economic cake.

On my last visit to Prague I had been told that the tattered appearance of local industry was the consequence of the re-allocation of credits to Slovakia. This time I went to Bratislava to see. Already on the journey it was plain there has been drastic catching-up in both urbanising and industrialising, and in their concomitants: pollution and the transfer of peasants from country cottages to barrack blocks. The partially preserved old city of Bratislava is dominated by the huge Soviet war memorial, straddling the highest hill.

I had an interview with a trade-union official, an editor, and an economic planner; all contrasted the recent growth with the wretchedness of pre-War Slovakia from which one-seventh of the population emigrated. They told me that though initially they had had trouble with the "Kulaks", today the peasants no longer want private farms, which impose excessive and irregular working hours. It reminded me of a favourite Czech gibe, "Rather socialism than hard work."

As Slovakia is Catholic, I enquired whether the Church was as influential as in Poland. The general answer was that the Nuncio frequently visits the region, but there can be no reconciliation if the Vatican continues to "live in the past" and wants the Bratislav bishop consecrated in Budapest. The disagreements between Church and State have left twelve dioceses bishopless.

In 1980, I recalled, the students at the Bratislav Theological Seminary had demonstrated in favour of *Solidarity*. The dean, Michal Provina, had expelled several students and told the rest in so many words to shut up or get out. At the Seminary I asked whether anyone could speak English or French. A shy young student agreed to talk to me—though not about Poland, on which he said he was "not informed." In his view the Slovak Church confronted "two major difficulties", first, separation from international Catholicism; secondly, the restrictions imposed on the number of priests. Many parishes in this very Catholic country have no spiritual guide, and many old priests are forced to go on working until they die. . . .

MY SLOW TRAIN (there were no expresses) wound through the lush Danube Valley. There was no greater indictment of the "progressive" leadership than that under its forward-looking management a country so richly endowed could not even feed its people. (Agricultural self-sufficiency is one of the Party's "long-term" objectives.)

The "levelling process", which officials at the National Bank in Prague had said was now complete, had been achieved not only by the promotion of Slovakia but manifestly by the demotion of Bohemia. Fortunately for Moscow, some of the enmity which might have turned against the system has been dissipated in interethnic enmity, in which the people of each part of Czechoslovakia blame their troubles on the other.

Hungary in Double Focus

ARRIVING in the evening at Budapest's *Royal* (not too regal but a great deal better than the Prague *Palace*), I telephoned a Hungarian journalist who it seemed was no longer there. The people I spoke to engagingly insisted that I must not spend my first evening alone, and they sent a young friend to drive me to their small suburban flat. Both taught at the University, and as they talked about their life I became aware of the contrast between the rosy Western perception of the liberalising Kadar régime and what living under it is really like.

In Hungary the Communist lid was not screwed down anything like as tightly as in Czechoslovakia, but Marxist-Leninism is still compulsory with promotion and publication dependent on the all-embracing Party apparatus. On the material side it was a familiar story of the Communist impasse: price-controlled commodities unavailable; privately marketed products generally above the range of official salaries; imported items (like coffee) suddenly vanishing from the market. More frequent shortages are the symptoms of a very real crisis: except by rolling back its debts or indulging in new ones, the Hungarian State is no longer able to pay for the raw materials necessary for its industry. Luckily the Hungarians are very good bankers.

The trouble (made worse by increased Soviet stringency) comes partly from the disastrous decline in Hungary's terms of trade. But most local economists I consulted were candid enough to blame it also on the way Hungary was governed. Amazingly, for a Communist country, the subject is publicly discussed at an open weekly University seminar chaired by the "eccentric professor" Tibor Liska and often attended by up to 1,000 listeners.

I called on Liska (a jolly man, evidently much in demand) whose next seminar, he said, would discuss "the case for allowing competitive banks

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to issue their own paper money." Liska described macro-economics as a preposterous invention of Fascists like Horthy, for the purpose of militarising society. His hero was Friedrich (*Road-to-Serfdom*) Hayek, whom he would have dearly liked to invite to the seminar.

The Hungarian officials put on a good show, and responsible Western observers (including correspondents of the *Financial Times* and representatives of the IMF) marvel at Hungary's stable progress towards a stable economy, its "healthy mixture" of public and private ownership. As a worldly-wise French diplomat put it to me, "*Ils font semblant.*" As soon as you look more closely it becomes apparent that all enterprises, public or private, are as one Hungarian economist said, "vassals of the State." Every contract includes a paragraph by which the authorities may disallow any clause deemed to be in conflict with public (i.e. Party) interest. In theory "competition" is encouraged, but companies are not allowed to shed labour and never go bankrupt; the State is always at their elbow.

The reality is partly hidden by the prominence of what are sometimes referred to as "Hungary's Red Barons", the millionaire entrepreneurs who successfully run efficient conglomerates. I called on one: Ferenc Varga, head of a diversified agricultural grouping, who told me he can get all the credit he wants for periods of 30 years at a rate of 1-to-2% interest. He started with a collection of cooperative farms, extended into auxiliary products and services, and made his really big money in a joint venture in Cyprus to export some 12 million flowers a year.

The *laissez-faire* principle is honoured, but only in so far as it does not limit Party power. Three-quarters of Hungarian families are believed to derive part or all of their income from the non-socialised (and often illegal) sector; obviously official regulations restricting private enterprise can mostly be disposed of by buying off the official regulators.

IN RECENT YEARS Hungary has had not only a "secondary economy" but also a secondary political life—complete with *samizdat*, a free University, and elements of a distinguished leadership. Of the incorruptibles, the most notable is Laszlo Rajk, son of the Communist leader who was hanged in the Stalinist show-trials. During the 1956 revolution, Rajk's mother took him, while still an infant, into the Yugoslav Embassy to seek asylum with Imre Nagy. The whole group left on the false promise of safe conduct, only to be kidnapped by the Soviet police and bundled off to prison in Rumania. Here Rajk spent his early years; later, after the rehabilitation of the survivors, he was helped to go to Canada where he graduated in architecture at McGill.

Now back in Hungary, he taunts the guilty men of 1956 (who, he is confident, will not have the nerve to take on another Rajk). On Tuesday evenings his flat is open for the sale of often quite elaborately produced *samizdat* literature.

As an architect Rajk has found himself out of sympathy with the bombastic official style. Recently an old town had to be rebuilt and he prepared designs in keeping with local taste and tradition which he knew would not be officially approved. He then challenged his fellow architects to a competition and was astonished by the willing participation of leading practitioners. When I met him he was preparing a private exhibition of their drawings.

Unlike Rajk and his friends, most educated people, including highly placed journalists, felt that "Kadar Communism" with all its faults was "the only alternative" to Soviet intervention. To many of them the Polish upheaval, as well as being economically costly (depriving Hungary of needed coal), was also a political embarrassment which might frighten the Russians into stamping out Hungary's own limited liberalisation. Yet I was told of an opinion poll, commissioned for the private use of the Communist Party, which showed that some 53% of Hungarians were on the side of *Solidarity*.

Even those who accept the Kadar compromise still reject and ridicule the compulsory dogma on which the system is based. Michai Kornidez, the Party's *apparatchik* responsible for ideology, recently protested that "Nowadays, even the acceptance of Marxist principles is an act of courage." He blames this state of affairs on the failure of those who still defend Marxism to get any real support from the leadership, noting that "troublemakers" gravitate towards provincial centres where ideological control is weaker and "they have a better chance of reaching the public." He is quite right. I learned that all Budapest was driving the 200-kilometre journey to Coposvar to see a local production of the play *Marat*, in a version which ends against a backcloth (easily recognised as Budapest 1956) with a weeping man carrying a paving-stone across the stage. In satire and black humour, Hungarian film-makers are even bolder. One film, *Witness* (which recently reached London), though nominally about post-War Hungary is an obvious spoof of Brezhnev, played by a man who is his double.

MOST YOUNG PEOPLE turning their backs on the ideology go in for punk and pop. Recently, too, there has been some evidence of a religious revival associated with a growth of pacifism. "Conscientious objection" is not recognised under Hungarian law, though a young pacifist recently pleaded

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that he was within his rights as the Hungarian Constitution concedes freedom of conscience. He was condemned to prison after a closed hearing before a military tribunal which refused to hear his statement. Against his will, his defence lawyer pleaded guilty.

Pacifism has also gained converts within the Catholic Church. Kadar has no trouble with the top dignitaries, who accept the Austro-Hungarian tradition of clerical subordination to the State. Some young priests, however, are openly encouraging young men to refuse to serve. One of these, Father Kovacs, known as an eloquent preacher, had been transferred by his superiors to a remote parish. When I met him he was still publicly insisting on the incompatibility between Christianity and war.

Pacifism is a new, if still marginal, element in Hungary. Nationalism is a far more widespread creed, and Kadar is constantly urged by his people to protest against the fate of the one-third of Magyars who live outside Hungary's frontiers (most of them in Transylvania, now under Rumanian rule). One of those most fervently concerned was the aged and eminent writer, Gyula Illyes, who has accused the Rumanians of "cultural genocide" against the Magyars in Transylvania, and says his many friends in high places agree with him. Rumania was the next country on my list; I promised I would go and take a look.

Rumania: Cabbages & Kings

EVEN ON MY FLIGHT from Bucharest to the Transylvanian city of Tirgu Mures, it began to appear that "cultural genocide" was something of an exaggeration. The woman next to me was a Rumanian music-teacher going back to her job. I asked her how she managed with the language problem, and she said it was no problem: she and a Hungarian friend shared out the pupils according to nationality.

In Tirgu Mures, a Hungarian-built city, all the signs and notices were in Rumanian: but Hungarian was widely spoken, there were Hungarian schools, Hungarian theatres, and no signs of compulsory assimilation. The "Rumanianisation" of the higher institutes of learning would perhaps be less objectionable if the Rumanians had allowed their Hungarian compatriots free access to Hungary, or vice versa. It was Eastertime, and a hospitable elderly couple of *ci-devant* nobility, whom I had met in Budapest, planned to drive across with a car-load of presents for their famished Transylvanian relatives. They never arrived. I later learned that the Rumanian frontier guards had stopped them, seized their luggage, and declared their entry permits invalid.

I went to Sunday Mass with a Hungarian friend in a fine 17th-century church with the priest delivering the prayers in Hungarian and the whole congregation joining in. (We had intended to slip out when the worshippers lined up for communion, but the aisles were too packed for us to reach the doors.)

Afterwards I asked my companion whether she did not regret the old days when the service, in Latin, could have been attended by all ethnic groups. "No, indeed. In the old days the priest turned his back on the public and no one understood him. Now we all join in." And so they did.

My most delightful memory of Tirgu Mures was a visit to a richly stocked library dating from the Enlightenment and donated to the city in 1913 by its founders and owners, the Teleki family. The collection included medieval illuminations, and letters by Spinoza and Descartes. One tempting book (displayed under a glass case) was Father Tournol's *The History of America Since Its Discovery* (Paris, 1768), subtitled: *The Natural, Ecclesiastical, Military, Moral and Civilian History of this Vast Region of the World.* The Rumanians reverently protect the library building and books, but show little regard for the descendants of the Teleki family who, I was told, live in poverty and seclusion a few blocks away.

FROM TIRGU MURES I took a 6:30 bus which stopped at every hamlet, and four-and-a-half hours later reached the Transylvanian capital of Klug. The name "Transylvania" conjures up wild and romantic images totally at variance with what we could see from the bus. The valley was thickly polluted, littered with tall chimneys, concrete factory blocks, and miserable hutments for the peasants coming in from the countryside. (During a single decade the rural population of Rumania sank from 49% to 29%.)

The bus was full of ragged (and, in some cases, rather hungry-looking) people on their way to work. I asked the woman sitting by me if she spoke any other languages; someone behind us heard and asked to take her place, "just to practise my French." She was Hungarian and spoke of the terrible difficulties in getting enough to eat. The local ration was only six eggs a month and a kilo of meat, and the only people who managed were those who, unlike herself, had family in the country. I asked whether life was in any way harder for Hungarians? No, she said, it was hard for everybody.

In Klug, with an introduction from London friends, I called on Professor Stefan Pascu and was told he was not returning from Bucharest until the evening. His hospitable and chatty wife invited me in and arranged for me to see the town—she was especially eager that I visit the ethnographic

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museum (she was a former director). I saw finely displayed specimens of embroidery and craftsmanship with clearly distinctive features of the three communities: Hungarian, Rumanian and Saxon. The prominently displayed captions explaining the exhibits were, however, all in Rumanian. I asked the director: Shouldn't they also be in Hungarian? He said he would like to have them in English, French and German for the sake of visitors, but Hungarian was unnecessary as everyone had to learn Rumanian.

Mrs Pascu gave me a succession of lavish meals, protesting (unnecessarily I assured her) that if the household was not quite as it should be, this was due to the unreliability of her Hungarian maid. (In the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the mistresses would doubtless be saying the same thing of their Rumanian underlings.)

When the Professor returned (he is head of the historical section of the Rumanian Academy), he took me into his library of rare books decorated with a bas-relief of his head over the huge chimney-piece. I soon realised why the Rumanians hold him in such high esteem. From 1003 A.D. to 1919, Transylvania had belonged to Hungary. But Pascu, working on the archives, had satisfied himself that the majority of the people were *always* Rumanian. He based his findings partly on the minority who paid tithes to the Catholic Church (they were therefore, presumably, Magyar) and partly on the medieval names of the villages.

I had to be back in Bucharest next morning, and though all the overnight places in the train were booked my new friend's name sufficed to get me a *wagon-lit*, a euphemism for a two-bunk compartment. Mrs Pascu came to see me off, and she hustled the lady who had reserved the bottom bunk up the ladder; feeling like a co-opted member of the East European *privilegentsia* (and a world away from the icy cold discomfort of my morning bus) I flopped down and slept.

Back in Bucharest, though food was not rationed, things were only marginally better than in Transylvania (where some of the old people had died of malnutrition). The central market-place by my downtown hotel had little to offer but pickled cucumbers and mouldy cabbages, and people queued (and sometimes fought) for fresh bread, milk, and any form of meat. Official prices had been hiked by 35% earlier in the year but, as I soon discovered, you can buy virtually nothing with the Rumanian *lei*—and virtually anything with Kent cigarettes. (No government warnings here: nicotine and tar could guarantee your health.)

RUMANIA was the only country I visited where the government had officially taken powers to direct labour. During the daytime anyone not at work (and unable to afford to buy themselves off) could be stopped by the police, expelled to barracks outside the city, and forced to work in the undermanned sectors: mining, construction, farming.

Rumania is potentially a rich country: the land is fertile. Its industrial tradition dates from before the War, and the country has a commendable number of engineers, agronomists, and other qualified technicians. Furthermore, since the Rumanians thumbed their noses at Moscow, the United States has poured in money, equipment, and food; and the IMF has made Rumania a full member (even though its government breaches almost every rule in the IMF charter).

Understandably, "anti-Soviet" developments were welcome—and the degree of Rumania's independence from Moscow was brought home to me when I went to see the Communist Party museum. Besides the predictable records and pictures of Victorious Revolution, there was a globe with a dagger through it, dated 1939: the year of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, unmentionable elsewhere in the Communist world.

None the less, with hindsight, it has to be admitted that in the particular technical dispute which provoked the rupture, Moscow was probably right. The Rumanian people would surely have been rather better off if their planners had concentrated first on cultivating the soil and not on trying to demonstrate their national independence by going all out for a late-Stalinist heavy-industry binge, which has made them miserably dependent on imported raw materials.

Now they have come full circle. One of the COMECON experts at the Foreign Ministry told me that the Rumanians are taking the lead in calling for a COMECON summit and for "a more rational division of labour" between socialist states. (The Rumanians now need Soviet oil for their underutilised refineries.)

One of the most incisive analysts of the present Rumanian crisis is Michai Bötez, a former (1977) fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Centre—the only Rumanian so honoured—whose international connections have so far protected him from the secret police. Ten years previously Bötez had warned against the "basic discrepancy" between the ambitions of the leadership and the level of development of Rumanian society. He had never been invited to the British Embassy though this might have protected him from harassment—and the diplomats would have learned far more from him than from the Rumanian officials who enjoy their hospitality and keep busy trying to cover up the truth.

Rumanians have concentrated their principal effort on the capital-intensive petro-chemical industry; they now produce only half the oil they

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need and have to pay world prices for the rest. Some observers attribute this specialisation to the influence of Mrs Ceausescu, who is a trained chemist and convinced of the prestige value of Rumania's involvement in advanced technology. The authorities are also concerned with her personal prestige: the British Royal Society of Chemistry made her an honorary member. (The Swedish Society did not.)

One resident and well-informed German businessman believes the Rumanian situation is getting worse. "Instead of adjusting the plan, errors are being compounded." London businessmen reported that Rumanians were failing to pay their bills. For many months the régime adopted an "ostrich policy", refusing to admit they were running out of funds. There is now an official request for the rescheduling of debts, although during my visit I was told several times by régime spokesmen that "Rumania's financial crisis is nothing but an invention of the capitalist press."

In drastic efforts to balance their accounts, the government has asked each foreign-trade organisation not to spend more foreign currency than it earns. This has often meant that farms are deprived of pesticides and herbicides just when they are most needed, and there have been reports of whole potato crops destroyed by Colorado beetle. Further, the import-saving industries have been deprived of equipment and material. Worst of all for the half-starved population, food is massively exported. In dealing with discontent, Ceausescu's methods have been described by his compatriots as "Recycling of Sycophants." The men around him have shown themselves capable of plugging leaks, papering cracks, and impressing the IMF, but hardly of making a break from the bad old ways of coercion and the greasing of palms. Repression has been intensified: the Party has again been purged, many young people have been dragged in for police interrogation, membership of the young Communists has become compulsory. Even transcendental meditation is being treated as subversive.

THE BIGGEST disappointment of my tour was my inability to discover what happened to Vasile Paraschiv, a member of the group who had tried to organise an independent trade union movement. He went to France in 1979, made contact with the unions, returned to Rumania, and has subsequently vanished. The Paris-based "League for the Defence of Human Rights in Rumania" alleges that his wife has received an urn said to contain his ashes; but no one could tell me whether this was true, or even where the family was. A French journalist who preceded me by a few months tried to make contact with dissidents—the French Embassy is still trying to find out whether he was knocked unconscious by vandals or by the secret police.

One of the disheartening things about present-day Rumania is the exodus of their best people. Rumanians express positive astonishment if one of their compatriots lucky enough to get himself a mission abroad willingly comes home.

Bulgaria: Six Vicious Circles

MY NIGHT TRAIN to Sofia left Bucharest station two hours late, and we lost another two hours on the way. A fellow passenger said that last time the delay had been six hours. My experience of the COMECON railway network, starting at Leipzig, confirmed that dictatorships of the Communist variety do not run their trains on time.

At my hotel, the *Hermus*, the staff was cheerful and indolent, quite different from the subservient wheeler-dealers in Bucharest. When I complained about the plumbing they did not send for a repair man but simply moved me to another room. (I turned on the radio and found it tuned to *Voice of America*.) The hotel was filling up with hundreds of Greeks arriving for the Orthodox Easter.

Although not top class, the *Hermus* was better than hotels reserved for ordinary Bulgarians. An English lecturer, waiting for a flat, was mistakenly accommodated in one of them: "the tablecloths looked as though they had been used to wipe the floor." At breakfast a guest had complained that the rolls were stale and when the waiter turned away, indifferent, started throwing them after him. The waiter brought fresh bread, carefully picked up the rolls from the floor, and laid them properly on the other tables.

Orthodox Easter is a busy time for the Bulgarian police. Not only is the great square in front of the cathedral closed to anyone without tickets but, presumably to avoid spontaneous jubilation, the whole city centre is cordoned off. The Very Reverend Dean of St Albans, Peter Moore, was visiting Sofia and kindly gave me one of the two invitations he had received for the midnight mass. He told me, ecumenically, he had spent "a fruitful day" visiting a monastery, accompanied by "a helpful priest" from Vienna, and had found the régime "relatively tolerant." His companion, originally from Latvia, now lived in Austria but frequently visited East European churches. I wanted to meet him, and the Dean gave me a scrap of paper on which was scribbled "Herr Thilo, room 449." I phoned next day, was put through, and began expressing interest in his experiences. Communication was suddenly cut off. As the Soviet-style telephone is unreliable, I tried again. This time I was told he had left the room and was not expected back.

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As for religious tolerance, one of the clerics on the way to the midnight mass told me that the religious seminary had had in the past 800 applicants for 400 places; it now had 25 applicants for 20 places. There is no provision at all, it appears, for the large Moslem communities (Turks, gypsies, and the Bulgarians whose ancestors had been converted under the Ottoman Empire).

Little of this is visible to Western visitors; there is a widespread belief that the Bulgarians are "the happy peasants of the Communist world." Certainly the Soviet connection is conspicuous: the main park is dominated by a monument to the Red Army, with a soldier brandishing a rifle. Even before his death there is a memorial bronze statue of Brezhnev. The past is also honoured with an equestrian statue of the "liberator" Czar Alexander III, and one of the longest streets is actually named Zhdanov, after Stalin's ideological henchman.

IT IS OVER a hundred years since the Russians helped create an independent Bulgaria. Are the Bulgarians still emotionally tied to the Soviet Union? A visitor was astounded to hear a burst of derisive laughter in a large cinema when a commentator declared that "the Soviet health service is the best in the world." (The Bulgarians should know: many have been sent to supplement Soviet labour in the mines and forests. While I was there the USSR was advertising good pay and technical training for more recruits.) One Bulgarian student, asked what he thought of *Solidarity*, answered cryptically, "We are taught to believe that working-class movements are always progressive. . . ."

President Todor Zhivkov, in power for 28 years, has a record of fidelity to "Big Brother." He had back-pedalled since the last time I was there, when there were hints of "organic links", interpreted to mean the incorporation of Bulgaria into the USSR.

In explaining why the Bulgarian economy is no longer expanding, Zhivkov, without naming names, has implicitly blamed the Russians. "We are not getting the agreed quantities of liquid fuel and other raw materials"—presumably "agreed" by the Soviet trade negotiators. Bulgarian analysts however, attribute the turn-down primarily to the fact that the Bulgarians, like the Russians, have failed to make the switch from an "extensive" to an "intensive" economy: that is, from a reliance on fresh supplies of man-power and resources, towards discovering better ways of using what they have.

When I was getting my visa at the Bulgarian Consulate in Budapest, I had a long wait (the responsible staff were out for coffee) and started reading—I was later allowed to take it away with me—the full text of Zhivkov's report to a recent Conference of Party Activists. Returning to that text during the final phase of my journey, I was struck by the similarities between the failures of the various Communist régimes, even though the countries differ so much in their culture, history, and state of economic development.

Zhivkov, who does not mind on occasion telling his people a few home truths, listed six "vicious circles", i.e. how things get from bad to worse. All would have applied to any member of the bloc. The first was a falling rate on investment. This also happens in the West; but Zhivkov complained, as any Communist leader might have done, that far too much fresh capital was wasted in new projects rather than in making the best of existing ones. The second was the failure to economise on raw materials. All Communist countries are exhorting their people to "save every drop of energy" but there has been no incentive for workers or managers to do so. Zhivkov gave the example of a stationary bulldozer with its engine running for several hours while its driver idled elsewhere.

The third (of which I had seen proof wherever I went) was the misallocation of labour. Peasants take time to adjust to city life. Zhivkov suggested that "sociologists" and "psychologists" should take their place alongside economists, agronomists, and engineers. I called on a leading sociologist, Chavda Kuranov, who agreed that any further development of Bulgaria would depend on "the human factor." He complained, however, that under the new economic rules, managers were expected to balance their books and were therefore less than ever willing to hire non-productive intellectuals.

The fourth was the non-application of scientific research, which Zhivkov said he found "heartbreaking." He pointed to a failure common to all the Communist régimes: an absence of mechanisms for introducing new industrial processes. This may well account for the extraordinarily high level of pollution of the air and the water in all their cities.

The next was agriculture: the admission that Bulgaria shares this common Communist failing may surprise those Westerners who see only the shop window of Sofia and the Black Sea resorts. But he could have been speaking for any of the Communist leaders when he said, "It is high time for us to overcome all the barriers, economic, juridical, psychological, which prevent the use of individual plots which would enable us to provide the population all the year round with supplies of meat, milk, fruit and vegetables. . . . It appears that a smallholder can get four crops from the land annually, whereas a large socialist farm cannot even manage two." The Red Revolution evidently debars the Green one, which in the West has given us our embarrassing agricultural surpluses.

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Finally, Zhivkov referred to the failures of Communist education. "We teach our young about one kind of world, then they leave school and discover another." If Zhivkov really believes, as he has often said, that the purpose of Bulgarian culture is "to create profoundly committed Communists", then in Bulgaria (as in the other Communist countries) things have gone very badly wrong. His late daughter, Ludmilla, whom he made Minister of Culture, had highly unorthodox views, practised Yoga and consulted clairvoyants and healers. On the day I went to the ancient city of Plovdev, my young interpreter turned out to be one of her ardent admirers. He had spent four years in Leningrad learning Japanese as well as English. He was preparing to take a Master's degree (which he hoped the Japanese might help finance) about the influence of Zen Buddhism on 14th-century Japanese culture.

BULGARIA HAS a long literary tradition. The lending libraries, often also discussion clubs, date back to 1875. Jenny Haitova, who recently translated *Pride and Prejudice* (with Virginia Woolf's essay on Jane Austen thrown in), told me that the 40,000 copies printed sold out at once and a second edition would have been put in hand if paper had been available.

Western novels are permitted provided they are not specifically "anti-socialist": Evelyn Waugh yes, George Orwell no (though I met an English schoolmaster who had discovered one of his pupils in proud possession of *Animal Farm*).

A young people's exhibition of sculpture in the centre of town displayed an astonishing medley: from giant Stalin-Hitler-type worker-heroes to contemporary experimentalists. The most moving was a crouching figure in bronze, with empty eye-sockets, seeming to symbolise subjection and despair.

Perhaps we should revise our view of Bulgaria as "the most conformist" of the satellites. While I was there an open satire on the Zhivkov régime (with jokes about the leader himself) had been in the Sofia repertory for two years and was still playing to full houses. It is characteristic of the remoteness of Western diplomats that none of them had heard of the play, *The Cannibal Woman*, or the playwright, Ivan Radoev—who has now run into trouble for even more controversial texts.

His play is set in an old people's home, symbolising Bulgarian society. A dumb old lady is knocked down by a brutal warden, and the shock restores her powers of speech. It is difficult to conceive how the tirade which she thereupon delivers—of which the following is a specimen—could ever, without collusion, have got through Communist censorship.

> ". . . they have stolen our water and laid asphalt roads for themselves. . . . Ecologists, symposia . . . our rivers run as black as those in the *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri. The experts tell us that Bulgaria hasn't a Mississippi or an Amazon! And now we are to lose the Maritsa and the Iskur? None of our valleys is clean, yet we have campaigned for moral cleanliness! Where are we to launder these morals? In the Iskur? Which stinks. . . . They have looted our country. But whose country is it? It does not belong to our neighbours."

Yes, old lady, I am afraid that Bulgaria, like the rest of Eastern Europe, seen from Western capitals or from British embassies accredited to Communist countries, *does* belong to the USSR. And what is more, it is to be actively discouraged from trying to reassert its independence.

The BBC on the other hand prefers to remain uncommitted. When Polish discontent exploded into violence, its correspondents rushed in and were able to transmit their own account of the upheaval. But where there is no visible "news story" neither is there any outlet for underground resentment, opposition and defiance: thus, by omission, the BBC is collaborating with the régimes in gagging unofficial views and news.

"We are not a platform for dissidents", said the director of the Czech services, pointing to a regulation prohibiting any of the East European services from using material which emanates directly from clandestine sources. When I returned from my own journey, nobody in the BBC wanted to hear of my encounters or allow me to argue the case for reassessing our policies towards the Communist bloc.

All this, no doubt, springs from the deep-seated belief that the handing-over of East Europe on a platter, inanimate as mutton, is the price the Kremlin exacts for keeping the post-War peace.

No one has put the case more cogently than the former Chief of Staff, Field Marshal Lord Carver, in his recent book *A Policy for Peace* (Faber & Faber, 1982):

> "The most likely cause of war [in Europe] would be the instability created by any attempt to juggle the kaleidoscope through changing the rigid pattern of frontiers established at the end of the Second World War. To attempt to change them or to entice one of the countries East of the Iron Curtain to take a step across it would be a certain recipe for a Third World War."

Is this necessarily so? As I saw during my journey, the East Europeans need no "enticing" to recognise that yesterday's totalitarian system imposed on them by yesterday's men is economically and ideologically fossilised. Must we assume that recourse to nuclear war is any less terrifying to

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them than to us? Supporting our friends in Eastern Europe is no more than implementing the Kremlin's own proposition: peaceful coexistence neither should nor could annul the battle of ideas.

THE LESSON OF MY JOURNEY was plain: our long-term aim should be to induce the post-Brezhnev leadership to scuttle the Brezhnev doctrine, remember their happy relations with Finland, and settle for the peaceful Finlandisation of the rest of Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile—it may be a very long while—we should surely be rethinking our attitudes. All of us concerned with Eastern Europe, and that includes the BBC, the Churches, academics, *et al.*, should systematically expose and denounce repression, drive as many nails as possible into the censorship, and remind the peoples of Eastern Europe that we share their concept of peace and freedom.

Internal resistance to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe should be treasured as a reinforcement of the deterrent: an additional discouragement to any further Soviet advance. No one seeks the militarisation of the conflict. But it is in our own interests to speak our minds, and give the régimes' opponents moral and political support for the risks that they, on their own initative, volunteer to take.

Shade

"Comparative darkness (and usu. coolness) caused by interception of light (and usu. heat) rays." (C.O.D.)

Oh Oxford definitions; a phone-call
to that science chap to check
the technicalities with memories
of rivers draped by green and listless
willows, of languid picnics
canvas screened against the blaze
of August afternoons. . . .

Shade:
such scarce resource, tangible
as gold and just as prized,
that folk invest their lives in it,
spend energy and time on its fruition,
such ambition as they'd own
residing in the compass of its stain.
It is a pension for their dotage
or a dowry for their young.

And where vocabulary's lyric
it's "inuwa", a cooling praise
across the tongue which means;
"A sanctuary against marauding Sun. . . ."
For Shade resists his crude advances,
folds her skirts against her knees
as he rides by. Demure hajjia,
as evening falls she *may* exchange
her purdah's wrapper for that
transparent silk your Oxford men define.

Stewart Brown

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MEMOIR

A Packet of Bloomsbury Letters

The Forgotten H. O. Meredith—By S. GORLEY PUTT

THE rats who live in London's drains—
The plague is breeding in their veins,
And men are setting in the cats
To kill the rats, to kill the rats.

Lest, as they were, things be again,
When plague was in the veins of men,
When chalkmarked houses men went by
And let men die, and let men die.

Are want of work and want of ease
Less evil than plague-bearing fleas?
If cold and hunger us infest,
Is it no pest, is it no pest?

We chalk the crosses on each door
To kennel up the stricken poor;
But as they rot and as they die
They taint our sky, they taint our sky.

H.O.M.

ON MY LAST ATTEMPT to enter my university library, I was refused admission on the grounds that I did not exist. I explained that I had been a senior member of the university for the better part of half a century, and that for the last ten years, as Senior Tutor of my Cambridge College, I had signed about two thousand entrance-slips for undergraduates. Nobody on duty that day had ever seen me. The official photographer for identity cards failed to find my name in the list of senior (very senior) members. I gave up.

I tell this dotty tale not to embarrass the Cambridge University Library but in partial self-exculpation for the absurd delay in the disclosure of the letters now for the first time printed below. On the date when I acquired them, 4 July 1940, there were other things to think about: we were at war. But how could it happen that a Cambridge don, living since 1968 in a society of intense bookishness, could have been blind to the great outpouring of Bloomsburyana—biographies, diaries, collections of letters The simple answer, vividly illustrated by the scene of low comedy retailed above, is that anyone wholly occupied nowadays in the gruesome industry of academic administration may well be forced so far away from his own academic field (in my own case, shamefully enough, Eng. Lit.) as to lose touch altogether with current publications. People paid to struggle with Department of Education & Science and Local Education Authority memoranda, and to appear regularly at tutorial trade-union committees resembling sessions of Star Chamber, have no time (and are hardly expected) to visit their university library.

So it was not until I had retired from the Senior Tutorship and happened upon Leon Edel's *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions* (1979) that I discovered that my own little cache of letters should have been released long ago to biographers and editors whose probable public requests for such scraps had altogether escaped my attention. (One such appeal did somehow penetrate: I was able to contribute an item to the Cambridge edition of the letters of D. H. Lawrence.) Yet if the circumstances of my final release of these documents are unusual, how much more so were the grim circumstances in which I acquired them. Again in self-exculpation, I must claim that if it had not been for my own haphazard call on H. O. Meredith on 4 July 1940, these odd letters, for so long laid aside, would not exist at all.

I HAD CROSSED OVER to Belfast in the autumn of 1939 to take up, at a tender age, my first academic job at the Queen's University there.

Outstanding among the professorial body at Belfast for his serene dissemination of wit and wisdom was Professor H. O. Meredith, who from 1911 had occupied the Chair of Economics, but who might well have held a Sofa of Classics, Philosophy, English Literature, and a half-dozen other of the liberal humanities. His pink shirts—or as much of them as you could descry beneath the large black beard which, in combination with an arrogant nose and a ramrod carriage remarkable in a man of his age, gave him the appearance of an Assyrian monarch—proclaimed a former Apostolic member of King's College, Cambridge. Nebuchadnezzar carried, however, no umbrella—and here the likeness falls short. For the black unfurled brolly was as inevitable a part of the outdoor Meredith as the curly black beard. The hand not holding the umbrella was always ready to be

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flung towards his friends in a vague gesture of detached greeting, for the Professor had preserved the Cambridge habit, so eminently suited to communities in which chance encounters in courts or streets are multiplied during the day, of affording the most perfunctory signs of public recognition while on his way to astonishing us all with endless talk in private apartments.

A printed tribute to H.O.M.[1] (unsigned but generally acknowledged to be from the pen of his former colleague R. M. Henry) justly records that "the circle of his more intimate friends was delighted by conversation of such range and penetration as is seldom to be enjoyed." This article, the occasion for which was Meredith's retirement from Queen's in 1945, expresses in another sentence the inestimable value of such a personality to any university worthy of the name:

> "Many a man with not half Meredith's powers, but the owner of a plodding pen, will be quoted as an authority; but Meredith, too impatient perhaps of the drudgery of writing or too sceptical of its value, was content with the possession and exercise of his own intellect, or in the small hours of the morning would permit an entranced friend to hear a monologue which expounded in print would have made a reputation."

I became one of these entranced friends. Meredith was one of the resident dons at the students' hostel to which I had been summoned as Warden, and if a warden's life is akin to that of a professional uncle, then H.O.M. became my eldest and favourite nephew. It may be imagined how comforting and reassuring, to a timid tyrant in his early twenties, was his ceremonious subservience to my petty office.

In Wartime Belfast, Meredith preserved intact a one-man atmosphere of the Cambridge of Lowes Dickinson, Lytton Strachey, E. M. Forster—and, indeed, of H.O.M. A humane scholar of the old school, he would range happily over a large intellectual terrain, and I never heard from Meredith's lips any of that mock-modest nonsense about a subject "not being my field." Everything was his field, everything his cup of tea. Ask H.O.M. to meet a couple of ungarrulous undergraduates, and he would speculate with airy irrelevance about what it felt like to be a Roman in Britain during the last years of occupation, and while the rest of us were striving to keep pace he would be off in his own mind toying with such a problem as: "Why is it, that when civilisations advance to the point at which good baths are common, conditions arise which tend to cause one to sever one's veins in them?..." Put a glass of madeira wine into his hand, and he would sit spinning fancies and elaborating arabesques which can hardly have been surpassed since the death of Coleridge.

On the morning of 4 July in that dreadful year 1940, I called on H.O.M. to say goodbye before donning the uniform of an Ordinary Seaman. I found him squatting beside an enormous open chest stuffed with letters and documents. With all the despair of a vicarious suicide, he was picking out items from the jumbled mass, glancing at them with leisurely melancholy, then tearing them up and dropping them into cardboard boxes for salvage disposal.

I tried in vain to stay his sacrificial hand. He would not keep the letters himself; there was only the simple choice between the waste-paper boxes and my lap. Alas, only a dozen or so landed in my lap. With their slightly discoloured envelopes and stamps showing King Edward VII or the first philatelic portraits of King George V, they call up—these few haphazard notes from D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Rupert Brooke, Lytton Strachey, Bertrand Russell, Roger Fry, J. M. Keynes, Virginia Woolf and others—a generation enviable in some respects and in all respects as distant from our own as that of Queen Anne.

There was certainly no trace, in 1940, of the Meredith who I now learn to my great surprise had been the "first great love" of E. M. Forster. Indeed, in his later years he was very much a ladies' man, as he demonstrated to a roomful of students when starring as Sir Fopling Flutter in my farewell play-reading of Etherege's *The Man of Mode*. Alas, the only scrap from Forster to fall into my lap that day was a brusque chit of 21 June 1911 announcing

> "I cannot come to Moscow ... as I am taking my mother to the Coronation."

Yet Forster's off-hand reception of Meredith's book of poems (*Week-day Poems*), just published, seems to confirm Francis King's view (in his reference to the Forster-Meredith relationship which so much surprised me) that Forster grew "impatient and dismissive" of his former hero: "Maiden lady stopping here", the note concludes, "who likes some of your poems and is glad that *all* of them should have been written." Here is the Francis King revelation, in his book *E. M. Forster and his World* (1978):

> "Forster once described Meredith to J. R. Ackerley as 'my first great love'; but, although the importance of the relationship to Forster is not

[1] *The Annual Record* of the Queen's University Association (1945).

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in doubt, its exact nature must remain obscure. Meredith, a basically heterosexual man, probably took the physical lead, either out of kindness or out of curiosity, but Forster was the one who was in love. Meredith's subsequent life seems not to have been changed by whatever took place between them; but Forster's was changed radically and forever. As so often in relationships in which one has been the lover and the other the acquiescing loved-one, there is usually an aftermath of resentment on the part of the former lover. Thus it was that Forster grew increasingly impatient and dismissive of the man whom he had once seen as holding the golden key to the prison of his pent-up sexuality."[2]

After reading this, I felt that Meredith must have welcomed the letter from D. H. Lawrence of 2 November 1915 (mentioned above) which opened:

> "Forster sent me your poems. Some of them I like very much. I hope he didn't bore you and lecture you, E.M. He is a silly."

That same letter (appearing in the Cambridge edition) ends with a comment as "impatient and dismissive" as anything by Forster on Meredith: "I can make nothing of the men, they are all dead. E.M. is dead, *und schon verweste*." Poetic justice?

Other sidelights on my old friend (often called "H.O.M." or just "Hom") awaited me when I finally read some of the collections of letters in which my own small cache should have appeared. Virginia Woolf[3] "hadn't seen H. O. Meredith's poems" by April 1911, but on Boxing Day 1912 she reported to Lytton Strachey that "Hom turned up two days ago" and finds him "large and serene and as satisfactory as a great big pigeon." In November 1915 (when Lawrence was down-grading Forster to Meredith) she informs Ka Cox that according to Sydney Waterlow, Hom's character, like his own, is "rotting." In July 1919 she told her sister Vanessa that Ernest Altounyan had been showing her a manuscript, adding "that he didn't care what I thought of it, but only wished to see how much I was capable of understanding. There's the cloven hoof of Cambridge in this—rather like Hom I mean; the honest sort. How I detest them." How much she detested them was confessed even to Lytton Strachey himself on 21 May 1912: "How difficult it is to write to you! It's all Cambridge—that detestable place; and the ap–s–les [the Apostles] are so unreal, and their loves are so unreal, and yet I suppose it's all going on still—swarming in the sun—and perhaps not as bad as I imagine."

Virginia's letter to Meredith (signed V.S. = Virginia Stephen) slots neatly into place in the Collected Letters—even to a carelessness about dates, in all her splendidly vivid outpourings to friends. Thus, she tells Hugh Meredith that she "went down to Asheham" on a Friday; on the following day (7 February 1912) she told Ka Cox that they had gone down to housewarm Asheham "last Sunday", and Violet Dickinson that the trip had taken place on Saturday. In these two letters, as printed in the Nicolson edition, the frozen pipes and starving birds and Racine recitations are all there; but Virginia Woolf's letter to Hom is the most amusing of the three:

38 Brunswick Square, W.C.
6th Feb. [1912]

Dear Hugh,

It is not laziness that has prevented me from writing—but disease. I have been in bed; a bed like a monastery—no talking, reading or writing, I mean. Now that is over, & I have been gossiping for 3 hours with Lytton, a sign of convalescence. He has been sketching his agonies and ecstasies for the past 6 months—you can't think how many times he's been on the point of suicide.

I kept looking at the door and hoping *not* to see you, at that dance. It was a very lame affair, whether it was my age or the fault of the people; and not worth climbing up and down Hampstead for. At the last fancy dress dance, as I think I told you, great scandal was caused by prostitutes dancing alone on a platform. Mrs Charles Tennyson and others had feared that all dances were doomed for ever; & this one had been carefully sifted, I getting in only dressed as a performing seal.

A general misery seems to have stricken everyone at this precise moment. No near relation of ours has died, but one has broken his arm, and another insists upon marrying a man who twitches all over, and takes a very jaundiced view of life, spending most of his time at the zoo.

I hear that Rupert is better, & is, I think, with Ka Cox at Munich; Norton is in London, said to be very ambitious and fat, & completely changed. How changed I can't say; because I haven't seen him, and no one can describe anything. That is the worst of living in an age given to blobbing with paint. I admit that painters are amiable, but so shapeless, like the backs of cows seen through a mist. I can't help thinking that you, with your prospect of bloodshed, beat us, who have been on our knees all day, with the King and Queen. On Friday, we went down to Asheham for the first time. I will give a list of disasters: all pipes frozen, no E.C. or W.C., grates with false bottoms which suddenly fell,

[2] The full story is told by P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster: A Life*, Vols. 1 and 2, (1977—78).

[3] *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Nigel Nicolson Vols. 1 and 2 (1975—76).

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under the pressure of coal, as though they were unaccustomed; about ten starving birds, who after defiling my comb and the butter, gathered round the fire, and were found in every corner. When one moved, all the wings flashed, which was very ominous and distressing. Then at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Marjorie Strachey who had been declaiming Racine with the utmost energy, stopped & said, "I think I have got chicken pox." She then went to bed, & had to be carried up to London recumbent, assailed with different symptoms every ten minutes, now rheumatic fever, now appendicitis. I hope you will write again.

Yr.
V.S.

MEREDITH HAD KNOWN Lytton Strachey at Cambridge, of course, long before he impinged on the perimeter of Bloomsbury proper. On 3 October 1903 (the year when, in Leon Edel's phrase, he was "wavering about his career") Strachey reported to H.O.M., in a get-well-soon note, that

> "I have been spending the summer in Kent among rain and hops. London I find pleasantly exciting & go to the British M. to read MSS. or pretend to do so. Have you seen the Independent R[eview]? I feel very important to be in No. 1 but I think it perhaps should be called the *Phenomenal Review*. Really Trevy! Can you imagine anyone else turning the Society into a political organisation? I gasp, stare, & write literature."

"Trevy" was G. M. Trevelyan, who had launched the new monthly in a liberal attempt to bridge the gap between the Cambridge Apostles, members of "The Society" (officially "The Cambridge Conversazione Society") and the rest of the world who in the Apostles' language were merely "phenomena." Hence Strachey's esoteric reference to "the Phenomenal Review."[4]

Another letter from Lancaster Gate (dated only "Sunday Mar. 28th") must be of this "wavering" period in Strachey's life, for it refers to the bulky dissertation on Warren Hastings which failed to win him a prize Fellowship at Trinity. His general despondency is expressed in language almost Jacobean:

69, Lancaster Gate, W.
Sunday Mar 28th.

Dear Hom,

You don't know the *appalling* effort it cost me to do up my damned dissertation, seal it, register it, & send it to you. When you've done with it, what will you do with it? Send it, perhaps, to Trinity, not to be forwarded. You see that my handwriting has suddenly gone to pot—I don't know why—It's never done it before. I'm overwhelmed with multifarious horrors, I breathe up filth packets, & disgorge dunghills at every step I take on the road of life. I have lately been a Poet, and am now a Litterateur. In the interval I was a Scholar. I rave, but then haven't I ample justification? I've ample justification but I've no time.

Your
G.L.S.

The third Strachey letter (from Burley Hill, Ringwood, Hants., on 5 May 1909) at first asks Meredith's "woman", "Clytemnestra", to pack up "an appalling pair of shoes and also a pair of trees of doubtful taste" left behind after a visit—as if to compensate for his own bundling up of the Warren Hastings thesis five or six years earlier. Then comes a paragraph of cosily relaxed pessimism:

> I'm installed here in considerable comfort and complete laziness, but I'm already beginning to miss the excitements of Cambridge. Life is too full of unresolvable equations. Perhaps the late Mr Gaye's manner of dealing with it is the best; but we are too sensible, or too cowardly, *nous autres*, to follow his example. As I realise this quite clearly, I have taken refuge in Dickinson's last novel, which is quickly lulling me into oblivion. But I can't make out why he won't let his characters call a french letter a french letter.
>
> *Yours ever*
> *Lytton Strachey*

"Gaye's manner of dealing with it" sounds like suicide—a reading clinched by Virginia Woolf's letter of April 1909 to Clive Bell, with a reference to R. H. Gaye (a Tutor in Classics at Trinity) "being found shot. Killed himself, I suppose."

The reference to "Dickinson's last novel" caused me first a puzzle and then a clue to a pleasant discovery. "Dickinson", in these circles, must surely be Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson? But Forster's bibliography of Goldie's works, appended to his memoir of his old friend, listed only such manifestly unfictional near-1909 titles as *Justice and Liberty: A Political Dialogue* (1908) or *From King to King: The Tragedy of the Puritan Revolution* (1907). The clue came in P. N. Furbank's biography of E. M. Forster, which records that in Forster's New Year's Eve review of 1907 he noted that "In Books most have been good. Conrad, Dante, Beddoes, H. N. Dickinson. . . ." This Dickinson seems, nowadays, to have sunk without trace—but in that same year, 1907, he had

[4] These arcane matters are neatly summarised in the Furbank biography of Forster.

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published with Heinemann *Keddy: A Story of Oxford*, on the title page of which he is described as being the author of *Things That Are Caesar's*.

Keddy is very well worth reading. It is obvious why Strachey complained to Meredith about the author's propriety of language. The novel is an exceedingly urbane study of a romantic friendship between two Oxford undergraduates: Keddy the trusting innocent becomes the mesmerised adorer of a dashing young aristocrat who loathes Edwardian orthodoxy as represented at Oxford by shovel-hatted clergymen and sporting bloods. This dazzling embodiment of Vitality (as Keddy, in his day-dreams, names his friend, almost as if he were a character in a Morality play) systematically flouts all "decent" conventions, getting involved with a lady of light virtue (in whom he appears to be physically quite uninterested) and in general courting innumerable social risks with the heart-in-mouth grace of an elegant tight-rope walker or trapeze artist. *Keddy* is not so much like Forster's *Maurice*, say, as a more romantic version of C. P. Snow's portrait of Roy Calvert in *The Light and the Dark* told in something of the atmosphere of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. The nearest H. N. Dickinson comes to the Cambridge of Forster and his friends is when he states the "only connect" theme in such asides as

> "it would be a proverb that though you turn out kindness and good works with furnace ablaze and chimneys smoking night and day, you will not ever touch a man's heart unless you can drink out of his tea-cup."

One can also imagine Strachey, Forster and Meredith himself all echoing poor young Keddy when he bursts out,

> "Oh, I'd rather be a navvy and cut my wife's throat in a temper, than stand there and send a fellow to hell on a theory."

A further likeness between H. N. Dickinson's Oxford and the Cambridge of Meredith and his friends (in their private writings at least) is that in the 328 pages of *Keddy*, crammed with witty and highly sensitive portraits of senior and junior members of the university, there is not a single reference to academic work!

ON THE SAME DAY in 1912 that Virginia Woolf wrote to Meredith, Roger Fry sent him a letter from Guildford. It was the year when Fry staged his second Post-Impressionist exhibition.

After discussing one of Meredith's articles, he offers him one of his own pictures. ("I'm glad to say a great many are sold but you can have your choice of these"), adding four dashing little thumb-nail sketches. Two are of Brusa in Anatolia (where, as I now learn from Edel's *Bloomsbury*, Fry had been during a jaunt to Asia Minor the previous year, 1911, with Clive and Vanessa Bell, plus H. T. J. Norton, the Cambridge mathematician who had visited Japan with Meredith): one "a big one but not the biggest of all", and the other of "bright houses and yellow poplars." The other two are described as "Still life" and "Crozant." Late in December Fry is again sending Meredith "my very rough attempt at woodcutting a Christmas card. Some people like it." As well they might, for its "best wishes for Christmas & 1913" is a 3 × $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch Madonna and Child of arresting vitality and yet with a suggestion of gaunt War-refugee suffering strangely prophetic of the year ahead. Fry has heard that

> "Goldie [was] rather depressed by India. He thinks their religion all very depressing and squalid. I wonder whether he'll get at them more later or whether he's too Western ever to understand—or whether it really is all horrible. . . ."

Fry had certainly hit the nail on the head. Meredith would receive Lowes Dickinson's views on India direct from Goldie himself. On 21 January 1913 Dickinson reported to him, from a camp near Madras:

> "There is no solution of the problem of governing India. Our presence is a curse both to them and to us. Our going will be worse. I believe that is the last word. And *why* can't the races meet? Simply because the Indians *bore* the English. *That* is the simple adamantine fact."

This letter is reported in Forster's memoir *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (1934), which in a deft sketch of some days he and Goldie had shared as guests of the Maharajah of Chhattapur, suggests one possible reason why the author of a Report to the Kahn Trustees on "The Civilisation of India, China and Japan" might have concluded that "the Indians *bore* the English." According to Forster, the Maharajah would ply his philosophical guests with such questions as "Tell me, Mr Dickinson, where is God? Can Herbert Spencer lead me to him, or should I prefer George Henry Lewes? . . ." The Maharajah himself was not bored. Forster reports that he "offered Dickinson his palace at Mau for ever, forgetting that he had given it to me only two days before."

MY LAPFUL CONTAINED, alas, no letters from Duncan Grant, or Wyndham Lewis, but a short letter from J. M. Keynes (from King's College, Cambridge, on 20 October 1913) is full of news of these two and Roger Fry, all active in "blobbing with paint", in Virginia's phrase.

Duncan Grant had, of course, together with

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Vanessa Bell, figured in Fry's second Post-Impressionist exhibition; and so had Wyndham Lewis. The acerbity of Keynes's letter, a concise comment on a major artistic rumpus well in line with Lewis's belligerent reputation, will come as no surprise to those who have followed the blasting and bombardiering relations of the Vortacist iconoclast with Bloomsbury.

Leon Edel records that after Lewis and Duncan Grant had met in 1907, their mutual dislike was instantaneous. "My gorge simply rises whenever I see him", wrote Duncan of Wyndham. "A little fairy-like individual who would have received no attention in any country except England", wrote Wyndham of Duncan. The Keynes letter offers what must be considered a pretty balanced view, from someone as deeply involved as himself in the Post-Impressionist cause and in support of the Omega Workshops in Fitzroy Square, founded by Roger Fry and adorned with works by Duncan and Vanessa:

King's College, Cambridge
Oct. 20 1913

Dear Hom,

Yes, everybody has had the letter. The "facts" in it are pure fabrication, as, indeed, appears on the surface. Lewis is the villain and has led others astray, partly (as he has since admitted) out of a desire for self-advertisement. What has happened, of course, is that Roger has got on their nerves by his fidgety ways and interfering too much. He has been on Duncan's and Vanessa's nerves just as much. But that's no excuse for a libellous and untrue letter of no literary merit. Roger is in France. I don't know that anything is being done. I think myself he had better ignore the attack. It's probably a good thing that Lewis has left the Omega as he is impossible to work with. Vanessa by the way has seen the *Daily Mail*, who declare that they know nothing of the story told in the letter and that they never intended to give the Commission to anybody but Roger. Also, the letter which accidentally failed to reach Lewis was only one out of a number on the same question which all reached him, and his pictures are actually hanging at the present moment (which you wouldn't gather from the letter) on the walls of the exhibition in question.

Yrs
J M Keynes

Nine years later, Virginia Woolf's letters still refer to Lewis with hostile hauteur. In April 1922 she writes to Vanessa: "Never did I read such an outburst of spite as Wyndham Lewis on Clive in the *Herald*. Why do you artists write like that? We don't. Even poor little squint-eyed Murry wouldn't."

In December of the same year she reports to Roger Fry that "Morgan and Herbert Read were dining here last night, and Read, who has been in the Wyndham Lewis pigsty without wallowing in it, had some amazing stories of the brutes. Lewis now paints in a shed behind a curtain—rites are gone through before you enter. . . ."

All in all, it seems that writers could be as spiteful as "you artists" who go in for "blobbing with paint." The Keynes report to Meredith does at least suggest that Roger Fry himself could set other nerves on edge, besides those of the man who in the words of Virginia's biographer[5] considered her and her Bloomsbury coterie as "representative of that ill-defined and largely imaginary body which, so Lewis imagined, had as its chief object the destruction of Wyndham Lewis."

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF a couple of letters of 1907 from Lascelles Abercrombie, who alone out of these correspondents has dropped out of sight nowadays, the rest of my scraps are from friends to whom H.O.M. had sent copies of his own *Week-day Poems* (1911)—A. C. Benson, Rupert Brooke, Bertrand Russell, and the mathematician G. H. Hardy.

Benson must have had an advance proof, or perhaps the finished manuscript, for he writes from Sussex on 16 December 1910. He took, naturally enough, a rootedly Victorian view of these (for 1910–11) unconventional verses. After admitting that "the author of five unsuccessful volumes of poetry is rather a biased judge", he marks the poems *A*, *B* or *C*, explaining that "By *A* I mean poems which seem to me of real poetical quality & artistic technique", "By *B* I mean poems which seem to me not *quite* to come off, in *expression*, I should say", and "By *C* I mostly mean poems which seem, in my judgment, to be constructed out of what does not seem poetical *material*." Indeed, A. C. Benson seems to be pleading for Sunday, rather than Week-day, Poems. His closing paragraph may well remind us of the puzzlement of educated men when confronted by the experiments (and, in Meredith's case, fairly prudent experiments) of younger poets in the early years of this century:

> But in my mind poetical material must either *be* beautiful, or be beautiful by expression. Here your subjects are often left in their native realistic ugliness—very clearly presented I admit, but to me wounding and disheartening. . . . There is something frank and fearless about it all, a desire to look all kinds of facts in the face: &

[5] Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 2 (1973).

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where you yield to a mood of beauty, it is extremely moving and thrilling.

As to the metrical points I can't make out if you have a theory or not—the exceptions seem too scanty for that.

Many thanks for letting me see them. I like looking into the minds of people, when they will let me.

Sincerely yours,
A. C. Benson

This bemused politeness of the old school (though capable of ambiguous suggestions as to what might inhabit "the minds of people") is in sharp contrast with young Rupert Brooke's reaction to Meredith's poems, with its mock-modest "they'll jostle and crush mine if it struggles to the light" and its knowing irreverence towards the established publishing houses Arnold and Dent:

24 Bilton Road
Rugby
January 5 1911

Dear Hom,

I didn't "acknowledge" them, did I? A thousand thanks. They were just the right ones (except *Fratri* which doesn't seem up to the rest). I do think they're very good. I think I like the nameless one ("Your limbs are rare") best. I'm very glad they're all coming in print, though they'll jostle and crush mine if it struggles to the light. Arnold must be rather shocked at them though! In his private life, anyway, he's a bloody little prim man like a little Major. I suppose "Another little bugger born" has changed to "devil" for the middle class public's sake . . . .

I know Dent's infamy. But I think I can manage him. I have seduced him with promises of a scholarly, bright, masterpiece on *The Times of Elizabeth* which I shall not do.

I start for Moldavia almost immediately. Farewell!! If South Europe is thrilling I'll try to tell you. By then you'll be the first President of the Republic of Ireland.

Ever
Rupert

In fact, Rupert Brooke did work away at his Elizabethan book during 1911. It won him his King's College Fellowship in 1913; but when it was printed in 1916, Dent, it is true, was not the publisher; *John Webster & the Elizabethan Drama* bore the imprint of Sidgwick & Jackson.

Bertrand Russell's letter was wonderfully generous. Meredith, ever the burly sceptic, could never have believed that his unpretentious verses caused Russell to rate his own "pursuits . . . worthless", or that his own rating was a little above that of Walt Whitman:

Van Bridge
Fernhurst, Haslemere
April 13, 1911

Dear Meredith,

I have just read your poems, & I must write to you about them. I think them extra ordinarily good—best when they are least like other people's. If I had done them, I should feel I had paid my debt to humanity. You have brought poetry back from the fiddle-faddle of literature and culture, & spoken of the things that matter in language that is natural. And you have succeeded in making one feel what you mean one to feel. Hitherto the only democratic poet has been Walt, whose optimism is a blot, & who has not the indignation and the shame. I know of no one else who has done at all what you have done, & I think it very important it should be done. But it makes me wonder whether my pursuits are not worthless.

Yours ever
Bertrand Russell

Most surprising of all was the response of the mathematician G. H. Hardy, who wrote a few plain yet eccentric sentences bracketing his friend with Browning, Shakespeare, Dr Johnson—and W. E. Henley:

Connel
Cranleigh
Surrey
(2 January 1912)

Dear Meredith,

I had your poems given me as a Christmas present. I'm ashamed to say I'd never got them before. But I would have done if I'd any notion they were half so good. Its very rarely I find I can read poetry at all. In fact Browning is the only poet since Shakespeare I really care about, though I must own to a weakness for Dr Johnson, and one or two things of Mr Henley I thought not bad. So it is really rather a triumph to rouse me to any sort of enthusiasm.

Ever yours
G. H. Hardy

If these astonishing opinions from a world-famous philosopher and a world-famous mathematician do not revive interest in Meredith as poet, then nothing will! Nothing, I fear, will. The poems are largely sardonic comments on the plight of London slum-dwellers, occasionally rising to a Blake-and-water indignation. Others attempt encapsulation of moods and incidents of love, but never come within recognisable distance of, say, some superficially similar Hardy poems. All are written in a jog-trot metre so unvarying that even

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when they justify Russell's praise for "things that matter in language that is natural", their complete lack of a personal rhythm denies them any continuing poetic life. The poem singled out by Brooke, "The Last Letter", would have been effective as a chill realistic comment on a passionate incident—but the incident itself is so muffled, so ambiguous, that the comment merely echoes its already prosaic quality. More typical of Meredith's collection is the other poem mentioned by Brooke, "A Christmas Birth", a sour yet basically unmoving expression of socio-political disgust which would indeed have been improved by the retention of the phrase "Another little bugger born." A more directly striking snarl of social indignation is the poem "Plague!" Yet even here the regularity of the verse somehow makes the content too bearable, too conventional.

If Meredith is ripe for reconsideration, it is not as a poet but as a man of abounding gifts who touched, sometimes with lifelong effect, the lives of many whose names have survived his own, though he had been thought by some to be the most brilliant of the whole bunch. P. N. Furbank recalls that during Meredith's dazzling youth at King's College, Oscar Browning had told him "You are very brilliant", adding ominously "but you will never do anything."

Well, perhaps Economics at Belfast was exile to Ultima Thule in the eyes of Bloomsbury. What was credited to H.O.M. at Belfast, in the 1940 days when I knew him, was not only such expected scholarly feats as his translation of *Four Dramas of Euripides (Hecuba, Heracles, Andromache, Orestes)*, published in 1937, but much more surprisingly the power of personality which enabled him to induce Belfast dockers to perform with great success in his own production of his translation of the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. On stage and off, he was always an actor. It is true that when Forster visited him in Belfast in 1914 he complained, of his former adored hero, "Hugh can't again be in my life what he has been.... To turn a hero into a jolly old boy is a ghastly task, but it must be done." Whether the jolly old boy contributed anything of value to the subject of economics, I do not know. He certainly was a life-enhancer to generations of undergraduates living in a less congenial nursery than King's College, Cambridge. What turned him into a jolly old boy? There is a thesis here, surely, for some young literary biographer.

I am only sorry that on that doom-ridden day in 1940 I could not save more evidence with which to refloat him, a little, in the new high tide of interest in his Bloomsbury friends.

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Glimpses of a War

Letter from Lebanon—By AMOS PERLMUTTER

I HAPPENED to be in London when war broke out in the Lebanon, and I was not surprised at the news. I knew that Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Arik Sharon and the IDF General Staff had been planning just such a military incursion for months and that it was only a matter of time and opportunity before the Israeli army would attempt to deal with the PLO. The truce so painstakingly put together by US Special Envoy Philip Habib was fragile and a patchwork at best. I would have no illusions about this operation—like most Israelis, I felt the motives for the war were just, that the PLO had to be removed as a military force and a terrorist threat in Lebanon; and for that matter, I still feel that way, although (again, like many) I have my doubts about General Sharon's ambitious widening of the war, the result of which appeared to be for a long painful month a political quagmire and a military stalemate in the streets of Beirut. I knew too that Israel was taking a risk, that it would be condemned and railed against, that there would be widespread destruction and a certain amount of civilian casualties (although not as many as claimed by the PLO who, at any rate, were putting Lebanon's civilian population in hazard by placing military installations and forces in their midst).

I was determined to go to Israel to see the war at first hand and had, in fact, an invitation to visit Yanush—General Avigdor Bengal, who commanded an Israeli army on the Eastern Front in the Bekaa Valley. Before I left London, however, the war "came home" to me. General Kuti Adam, a good, close and long-standing friend, had been killed in an ambush while trying to visit his son at the front. The news gave a kind of urgency and special emotion to my trip.

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Time in war gets stretched out, elongated, curiously compressed. I arrived in Israel early on a June day and spent most of it attempting to get to Yanush's headquarters; by the time I reached my destination, hot, sweaty, almost eaten alive by Lebanon's own peculiar voracious brand of bugs, it seemed I had been there for weeks and passed through a long kaleidoscope of endless images and impressions.

It is a peculiar sensation to arrive "naked" in the middle of what is very much a modern war, bringing inevitably as baggage memories of other wars fought on the same kind of bleak terrain but in a radically different way. This was a different kind of military operation, shrouded in technology, often impersonal, almost dispassionate in its nature, noisier. Yanush at one point described it to me as "a television war." The men I saw fighting it are different, too, reflecting changes in Israel: a new generation of Israeli soldier, young, crisp, casual, generally well-educated. They are not my generation, although I would often run across some face and figure from my past, reminding me of what I had been (and, embarrassingly, what I was today). I had fought in the 1948 war, which, in retrospect, seemed almost like a series of small, distinctly savage, and personal platoon actions. I had seen the Six-Day war of 1967 up close and I had been with General Sharon in his devastating and headlong drive to the Suez Canal in 1973. I saw faces from those wars, and faces from the peripatetic life of an academic that I lead now, friends whom I had studied with, lectured, had as pupils, helped and been helped by, men with whom I had spent long hours musing on politics and history. It felt strange to be often greeted by "*You*, a professor!" or to hear some impossibly crisp and cocky young Israeli soldier yelling "Hey, old man, what are you doing here?"

That June morning had started with arrival in Tel Aviv from the holiday-plush safety of London, armed with an invitation to see Yanush at his headquarters, a gift of chocolates from Harrods for his staff, and a certain amount of sombre foreboding in the wake of General Adam's death.
The VIP room at the military airport in Tel Aviv

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was a scene of typical Israeli confusion or *schlamperei*—soldiers lounging around informally, stern-faced *Mossad* intelligence personnel, brisk, young, blue-uniformed Air Force women serving coffee, and brown *Cobra* helicopters taking off and landing. I watched one *Cobra* unload its cargo of US-made machine-guns, ammunition boxes, tank shells and artillery shells, and sauntered over, trying to hitch a ride to the front, something the pushy *Mossad* men were also trying to do. It was almost midday by this time and the *Mossad* men in their soaked civilian clothes were bickering with the Air Force personnel, who were totally unimpressed. "I don't give a f—— who you are", one of them said, "there's no room."

"I'm going to ARMON (the code name for Yanush's headquarters)", I told the pilot. He looked me up and down with that brash frankness that seems to mark military pilots all over the world. He nodded. "You can sit on the ammo box", he said. I grabbed the earphones and planted myself. "Know how to use this?", asked another pilot, who looked implausibly young. He tossed me a *Galil* submachine gun. If I had any doubts that there was somewhere a war going on, the feel of the weapon, warm and heavy, erased them. I cradled it in my lap.

THE RIDE WAS BRIEF, over a landscape that flashed by in greens and browns, craggy and flat. When the *Cobra* finally set down, I realised one thing—I was nowhere near where I was supposed to be, but rather on the outskirts of Beirut in the middle of combat. It was all in front of me, a noisy landscape: artillery and tanks moving on the outskirts of the city, the pounding of shells in the distance, the sky streaked with fireworks, the beach like a postcard in the distance. I didn't know where I was, and the *Cobra* pilot didn't seem to particularly give a damn. "Here you are—give us back the *Galil*", he said, and climbed back into his helicopter. The dust camouflaged for a moment a Lebanese village nearby. I had to keep moving (for that Lebanese species of bug seems to find me a particularly inviting meal), and wandered toward the village where children were running about among broken shellcases in the streets; but, except for the din of the artillery shelling toward Beirut, it was a relatively uneventful scene.

I walked toward a house which had once been used by the PLO but was now being occupied by a group of young Israeli soldiers, lounging about in various states of what soldiers take to be relaxation. For the moment, the war seemed to have stopped. Some were cat-napping, cradling their weapons, quite oblivious to the flies using them as landing-strips. Others were listening intently to a staccato voice on the radio. War news, I thought, the latest communiqués. Not on your life. They were all inveterate soccer fans and were listening to the World Cup games, which they often could not catch clearly because of interference in the Lebanese mountains. "I don't know why Sharon couldn't wait until the Cup was over to start this damn thing", one of them complained.

Someone was calling me. I turned around, startled. "Amos, what in hell are you doing here?" was the greeting from Chitta, a reservist colonel, an insurance man in civilian life and an old friend. "Can you get me out of here?" I pleaded. "Tough", he said. "You've got to stay here in the stink with me." The best he could do was for a medical officer to come round and envelop me in a gigantic spray of DDT to ward off the bugs. "Don't drink the water", Chitta said. "Try our rations—gourmet stuff." "How do you live with the damn fleas here?" The gourmet food turned out to be classic Israeli rations—biscuits, tea, kosher soup, boiled beef.

He gave me no hope of making it to Yanush, but he did take me down to what he called "The Camp." It turned out to be a series of gigantic greenhouses where the Israelis had interned what appeared to be half an army of Palestinian guerrillas. Row upon row of prisoners were sitting on the floor in classic prisoner-of-war pose, head down, blindfolded, hands behind their back. They all appeared to be in various stages of misery, a bleak picture of despair, uncertainty, confusion and defeat as if all the passion and life had gone out of them. The war, however, was not over for them yet. Arabic-speaking *Mossad* officers wandered among them, as well as especially imported linguists from Jerusalem's Hebrew University, Arabists who knew languages and dialects and all the inflections and accents of babble to be heard. Some of the more obdurate prisoners, PLO activists, were being interrogated rudely; their guards, especially the Druze Arabs, prodded them sharply with rifle butts. That treatment, including deprivation of food and water, was evidently reserved for known PLO officers and terrorists whom the Israelis do not consider to be "prisoners-of-war" but guerrillas, irregulars. Many of them had been known to be involved in past terrorist activities, and their interrogators treated them accordingly. Beyond depriving them of food and water—and roughing them up a bit—the worst threat that could be delivered by the Israelis was a promise to "dump them on the Jordanian or Syrian border", where a different sort of unpleasantness might well await them.

The *Mossad* men and special interrogators were swarming over the prisoners, whom they had separated into different categories: activists or commando commanders, infiltrators and leaders of the *Katyuska* squads, PLO junior officers and non-commissioned officers, and Lebanese collaborators of doubtful status. From them, the interrogators were trying to draw a composite picture

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of the PLO organisational structure, including the military structure in Beirut. There was a constant hum of voices rising from this mass of misery, sometimes squeals and even moans of pain coming from bearded, dirty faces. It was strange seeing the Hebrew academicians wandering through this scene; it was almost a reminder of my own life. I recognised Shlomo Shoham (head of the Criminology Department at the Hebrew University), looking the very picture of the university intellectual, bespectacled, bookish, boyish. He appeared like a man who had gone out looking for a library and had wandered by mistake into this dank, humid greenhouse of defeat.

THE GREENHOUSE SCENE had a compelling fascination; but I had had enough. I was supposed to have been with Yanush hours ago. Relief finally arrived in the person of a small, white-haired man in Air Force dress blues—David Ivry, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Air Force, who had just arrived to inspect the hastily-erected air-strip nearby.

Ivry is in what I would call "the Weizmann mould", that is, he affects the British officer type, rather dashing, always neat and polite. I had met him several times, socially, in Tel Aviv, and in Washington. Here he was all business, describing the progress of the war, glad but not gleeful over the destruction of the Syrian-Soviet missiles in the Bekaa Valley.[1] "You want to get to Yanush?", he said, "I'll take you there." "Will we still be drawing anti-aircraft fire along the way?" Ivry shrugged. "You mean, what are the risks?", he asked. "If you can't take risks in a war, when then?" It was the old Jewish habit of answering a question with another question.

Finally, I arrived. Ivry's helicopter dropped me off at Yanush's camp, near his ammunition dump, and a driver took me in a half-track to the command post. Even driving hell-for-leather around the base of the mountains, one could smell the war. There was the old, sickly-sweet smell of death, the smell of ashes and oil from burnt-out half-tracks and jeeps along the way.

Yanush is there, lanky and grinning, surrounded by his staff officers. He is a new phenomenon among Israeli generals, by which I mean to suggest the size and scope of this war. He is a commander of an entire army, some three-and-a-half divisions. No Israeli general has ever commanded troops and material on this massive scale.

"Amos, where the f— have you been?", Yanush shouted at me, Anglo-American military patter being almost the order of the day. I explained the problems I had been having with getting Air Force transportation. "Damn the air force", Yanush said. "They're always running their own show. I don't even have my own helicopter—can you imagine?" He introduced me to his staff, division commanders and colonels, all of whom looked younger than they should (or perhaps it's always been that way in the Israeli army). "Here's the professor", he said. "If you're going to be here, you might as well wear a uniform." He handed me a reservist captain's uniform and a captured PLO belt. I demurred.

Yanush may yet turn out to be the most fascinating Israeli figure to emerge from this war (certainly more appealing than Sharon): a man of many parts—moody, handsome, reserved, a hesitantly slow speaker whose cautious manner belies a shrewd, often cold and ruthless personality. He seems always to be brooding (thinking top-secret thoughts, hoarding old memories?). His rise in the Israeli army has been swift. Only 44, he came to Israel at the age of six, a Polish orphan whose relatives had disappeared in the Holocaust. A Kibbutz veteran, he has been married twice and has two grown-up daughters, both in the army. He first came to prominence in the 1967 War, was wounded in that campaign, and went on to become one of the key figures in 1973. If Sharon's march on the Suez Canal was the supreme offensive action in that war, Yanush probably was the defensive hero; as commander of a tank division, he stemmed the initial and perilous Syrian tank attack in the opening phases. Veteran observers of the IDF had told me to "Watch Yanush . . . the next Chief of Staff." He has risen on ability, and it is generally accepted that it was Chief-of-Staff Eitan and Yanush who planned the details of this campaign (not, as is often believed, Sharon, who nevertheless takes credit for it). Among those who are supposed to know, one hears that there's no love lost among them. Army commanders in the field are half-combat, half-cabal. A sharp edge came into Yanush's voice when he talked about the Defence Minister. "The bastard", he said, "is taking us into Beirut. Is he trying to replay World War II all over again?" Yanush has risen along with Eitan, and in a sense modelled his own staff along similar lines. His division commanders are all in their thirties and have served together all along the way. Yanush was fascinating to watch in

[1] Military secrets are hard to come by, but I note that one American intelligence expert on armaments, after a technical on-the-spot inspection, was able to report that "the Israelis in the Lebanon invasion had displayed startling capabilities, not possessed by NATO, for destroying Russian-made weapons." Advances in military technology had enabled them to develop a 105 mm. armour-piercing shell which destroyed a dozen T-72 tanks, while "nothing in our inventory can penetrate the T-72. . . ." According to the despatch in the *Daily Telegraph* (11 September), Mr Joseph Churba went on to estimate that

> "Israel, mobilising only 10% of its forces, destroyed Russian equipment worth $3,000 million (£1,740 million) and captured in the first week arms valued at $2,000 million (£1,160 million)."

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action: tough on his officers, quick to make hard decisions. Patience doesn't appear to be one of his strong points—he appears to be moody, and eager for action.

ON MY FIRST NIGHT at his headquarters, Yanush met with his staff, and it was not so much a meeting as a lecture. Some 30 officers crowded into a large tent-like facility, all of them in combat uniform. The place was full of plastic-covered maps showing troop dispositions in the Bekaa Valley. Many of the officers seemed a little nervous, as if they were in awe of him. Yanush's questions were brisk, sharp, and his final assessments came out like little mortar rounds.

To a field intelligence officer (a Yemenite Jew, a lieutenant-colonel): "What are their tank positions? Where are the mines? What about the flanks?" He asked about a small hill at the base of the valley, and suddenly the atmosphere became tense.

"We should have had that hill in our possession", he said. "What in hell happened? Did we desert our positions? We just don't give up a position. Who the hell commanded that battalion? I don't give a damn what he is, colonel, lieutenant-colonel, that man should be under arrest. Get rid of him—and get that hill back."

I noted that Yanush was obviously not comfortable with the Air Force liaison officer: while the officer was reporting, Yanush looked elsewhere, almost avoiding him.

"I don't want any more 'close support'", he said angrily. "We got 28 of our own boys killed that way. It's too tight. You call Eitan. You tell him. No more close support, not while we're engaged." But like foot-soldiers immemorial, there was fondness and warmth toward his own people on the ground. "Ah, artillery", he said. "That's the king of battle." Some personal antipathy (toward his HQ communications officer) just as obvious. "My God, I can't even get my wife in Tel Aviv", he complains. "What *is* going on here?"

Finally, he speaks at some length of battlefield matters. "All right, here's what's going on", he says. "Arik, that crazy bastard, is going to Beirut. Technically, the truce is in place, but you can consider yourself in a war situation. I want to know what the Syrians are up to. Anything that moves, you shoot it, truce or no truce. Don't forget now, we're fighting a good, professional army here. So don't underestimate them. Of course, we'll beat them anyway."

The meeting runs at a rapid pace and lasts about an hour. "That wasn't a meeting, Yanush", I said. "There was no discussion. It was a lecture."

He laughed. "Discussion?", he said, "Debate? Don't give me that crap. This isn't a Harvard seminar."

By nine o'clock, it's turned dark with the black shadows of the Hermon Mountains.

"Well, what do you think?", he says, as if I could have an opinion. "Should I get rid of that bastard?" He's talking about a two-star general who usually wears picture-perfect, immaculately creased uniform, and apparently is nowhere to be found, as usual.

"I'll bet he's in Haifa with some woman", Yanush said. "The only nice thing about him is that he's never around."

"How did he get to be a general?"

"Amos, even the Israeli army has its ass-kissers", he says. "That's how he did it.... And don't look so surprised."

It's pitch-dark and the bugs are now out in full force. "Time to sleep", Yanush announces. I complain, "It's only nine." I had hoped for a moment that we might be staying overnight in one of the big nearby houses. "No, sir", Yanush says. "Into the big tent for us."

Yanush and Division Commander Emmanuel Nimtza are asleep within minutes. For a moment, I have nostalgia for the creature comfort I used to be used to. I can't sleep. I want to read. Instead, I'm listening to them snoring and watching the shadows of the guards outside. I recall the last thing they said to me: "If you gotta go, go outside but not too close, so it doesn't smell so much...." I feel unhappy at the prospect, and wait for sleep.

IN THE MORNING, a hurried meal of eggs, bread and a mixed "Israeli salad." Yanush doesn't take breakfast. Amid all the organisational activity, I note again the total informality of this army. I have yet to see a single salute.

We helicopter to an ex-Lebanese communication station, complete with a huge telescope and tower. Inside, two reservists man the observation post, which for the moment meant taking it easy, reading girlie magazines. Yanush launches into a cascade of questions which has the captain and sergeant quaking, "Why aren't you shaved? What have you seen? What do you mean, you don't know how to operate this? See that church over there, it has PLO tanks parked in it. You didn't know? What am I to do with you? Do I have to get rid of both of you? I want a full report on everything—weapons, tanks, anything that moves, by the morning." He looks at me with a kind of mock-disgust, as if to say, "What are you going to do? It's a people's army. What can one expect?" He seems almost chagrined at "chewing out" the two soldiers, but I suspect he also enjoyed it.

"All right, Amos", he says. "Let's go to war."

We're flying toward the Beirut-Damascus road, the western sector of Yanush's front, where the

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opening phases of the Beirut-Damascus Road battle are about to develop.

"We could die up here", he says, matter-of-factly. "Yanush", I say, "You can't die. You're invincible."

"Kuti Adam died", he said, talking about my old friend, an early casualty.

The helicopter lands near another observation post. It is a pleasant, hazy day, and the area, on any other occasion, would be a fine place for a picnic. Before us are thousand-year-old Lebanese cedars, with a curiously denuded quality about them; for something so ancient, they seem almost like scrub, vulnerable, unimposing. We're on a hill covered with cedars, and there's another telescope. "Let's watch the war", Yanush says. Overhead, wave upon wave of Israeli jets—F16s, F15s—scream through the air. You can't actually see them; you just hear them, and see the blue-red flares, the flight of the missiles.

Through the telescope, one makes out a formation of Syrian tanks, probably battalion strength, only a mile or so from an Israeli tank force. The smoking muzzles of the T-62 Syrian tanks reflect in the sunlight. Yanush is explaining it, almost refereeing it, like some expert commentator at a soccer match explaining the individual moves as if it were some kind of tactically intricate game. "Now watch", he says. "First those three tanks are going to get hit. Watch it now.... Here's where we outflank them. There's where they'll start their retreat...."

It's a kind of running commentary, but he's obviously not seeing what I'm seeing. He's looking at the spectacle with a general's eyes. All I can see (and everything's in miniature) is here and there tanks exploding, here smoke, there flames. Now the Syrians are evidently collecting their wounded, backing away. It's a little like watching it all on the six o'clock news, "a television war." The whole affair lasts only about 15 minutes. There was an unreal quality to it all, it is almost neat and tidy were it not for the fact that you realise that the "wounded" out there had been roasting, choking, dying. Not a single Israeli tank has been hit during the engagement.

Yanush seems satisfied. "Those few minutes probably cost the Saudis about 24 million dollars...."

GESHER A-ZIB is a kibbutz in the northern part of Galilee which had once been pounded by PLO rockets, but was now an army centre where Israeli escorts were being assigned to journalists heading towards Lebanon.

I was in a half-track with three journalists—a Norwegian from Trondheim, a German woman writer for *Stern*, and an English reporter representing the London *Times*. Our Israeli escort officer was a former professor of law on reserve duty.

By the time we arrived in Sidon, the Israeli army had already swept through. The fighting was over. The city centre of this capital city of Southern Lebanon had been totally destroyed, with homes which had housed PLO rockets becoming prime targets for Israeli jets, artillery, and tanks. Nevertheless, although there seemed to be an uncommon amount of military activity still going on, the city was already beginning to take on a business-as-usual quality, with children on the streets, crowds of shoppers, and war-wise money-lenders exchanging shekels. War and death had been here, and had moved on.

My journalist companions each went their own way, burdened with their own passions and prejudices. The German reporter kept on muttering "Nazi, Nazi" under her breath, refused to visit hospitals where Israeli doctors were tending Lebanese wounded, and preferred to make a beeline for new scenes of destruction. I suppose that's the nature of all "news-hounds", but it irritated me. This predisposition to see things simply in black-and-white, to find villains to hate, as if perhaps by calling the Israelis "Nazis", she could somehow expunge the Nazis in her country's past.

A Red Crescent Hospital in the charge of Lebanese and Israeli doctors, operating under Israel's version of the Red Cross, tended to civilian wounded. One woman, with her head swathed in bandages, muttered about the PLO who she felt had brought this destruction upon them. Who could keep double-entry accounts of anger, guilt, punishment, suffering?

For the most part, throughout the town, the Lebanese were now streaming back into the city and seemed indifferent to the occupation, as if it was part of everyday life; in this land where a myriad of invaders have passed through, foreign troops appear to be part of the norm. At a former electric power station which now housed Israeli civilians just beginning to take over from the military, the signs of the backwash of war were more evident, and more moving. Here, Israeli officials mixed with Sidon officials, while refugees (who cannot, literally, travel anywhere—back to their home villages, for instance—without a pass) were patiently waiting. I was particularly moved by the plight of one family (man, woman, several children) whom an Israeli administrative official was not too politely refusing permission to proceed. They lived in one of the smaller villages to the south of Sidon and without a pass would be trapped here. The Israeli was firm, impatiently shaking his head. The woman turned to one of her children and whispered something in Arabic. "They're just like the others", I overheard her saying quietly, meaning the PLO. It moved something inside me—perhaps anger at the brusque

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incident, perhaps pity at the plight of the refugees. I had no official status, but I nevertheless railed at the Israeli. Before I knew it I had grabbed some passes and signed them myself, in Arabic, in Hebrew. I even heard myself threatening to physically assault him. The chap just shook his head. "There'll be hundreds clamouring for more out there ... don't you know that?" I didn't particularly care. At that instant, I felt I had to do something. There are moments when politics, personal purposes, professional aloofness, are suddenly displaced by something basic.

ALTHOUGH THE PLO had been routed from Sidon, their presence in some ways was very much in evidence, especially at the UNRWA school, Siblin. Ostensibly it was a United-Nations-run school for Arab and Palestinian students; actually it served for what amounted to a training ground for young and up-and-coming PLO officer-cadres from all over the Arab world.

It was eerie to walk through the school. The PLO had evidently gone in a rush, for they left innumerable signs of their presence behind, including dozens of Soviet-marked weapons boxes, pictures and posters of Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh, and vast collections of books, all of them dealing with military and ideological subjects, books on strategy and tactics, philosophical works on Marx, Engels and Lenin, and several books of verse by Rassam Ghanafani (a PLO leader who was a mixture of cold-blooded ferocity and literary talent, a terrorist who planned the PLO's Munich atrocity and who was in turn killed by the Israelis). There were scathing slogans scrawled all over the walls alongside swastikas—"*Kill the Jews*", and the like. In a strange way, I had a feeling of *déjà vu*. One could sense something implacable in these rooms, a determination and dedication. For my own part, it almost (not quite) reminded me of my days in the *Palmach* when we were all dedicated to the hope of a Zionist utopia. The dream that resided in this school, however, seems spurred, not by generous, youthfully idealistic hopes, but by hatred. Even in the hot Lebanese mid-day, the place seemed furiously cold. We in *Palmach* had not been spurred by hatred.

BACK TO Gesher A-Zib, and a return trip with two Danish journalists and one Norwegian, all of them rather less inclined to be "single-track-minded", being experienced veterans of other battles in Lebanon. The road is pock-marked, we roll from hole to hole. Near the outskirts of Beirut, there seems to be a kind of massive back-and-forth exodus, Israeli convoys loaded with captured PLO weapons mixing with an endless line of thousands of refugees heading back toward their villages.

The refugees are of two sorts. I have never in my entire life (not even in Stuttgart) seen quite so many Mercedes automobiles, some of them vintage. This group constitutes the displaced upper- and middle-class Lebanese, who seem basically untroubled, in good fettle, well-dressed, waving at us as they pass by. The second group is a slow-moving procession of human misery, faces reflecting a Lebanon that seems always to have been thus. I often saw small pickup trucks, piled high with clothing, bundles, furniture, with 20–30 passengers. They don't even look up or around. I feel I am witnessing not just the troubles of a day, but a continuing historic tragedy. The people appear, not bitter, injured, outraged, but weary and resigned, as if they are making this trip by rote; and indeed, many of them have made the journey before (during the last Israeli incursion, and during the 1976 battles between Christians, PLO and Syrians, and going back further than that to the long-standing civil war). Like the cedars of Lebanon, like the fleas and the hot sun, displacement is a fact of life, a natural phenomenon that comes unannounced but not unexpected.

AT BAABDA, at the entrance to Beirut, we are put under the charge of Colonel Paul Kedar (former Israeli Consul-General in New York), who has arranged for me to meet, over the next several days, the Phalange Christian leaders.

Fahadi Hayek, a 32-year-old Phalange intelligence and public relations officer, takes me on a hell-for-leather drive to Beirut, first to Ashralia, the centre of the Christian community in Beirut, and from there to the villa of Charles Malik, former president of the American University in Beirut, 82 years old, highly regarded and even revered.

The drive through Beirut (in a Mercedes, of course) is unrivalled east of the Nürburgring. Hayek, a personable officer in a green uniform (sporting the cedars of Lebanon), drives as if he's at a race-track. There are no stoplights in Lebanon; each dusty ride became a blur of images. At one point, we stopped to see a gnarled, aged Moslem, sitting below a high-rise building, pointing at the sky: "F16, F15", he says, proudly. His knowledge of aerial nomenclature serves as some sort of litany, and he seems pleased to be in touch. The skies are crowded with Israeli warplanes, heading toward West Beirut or wherever, and often you cannot tell whether you are in a "war zone" or not. One resigns oneself to disorientation as the sky lights up with flares and orange flashes; the nights and days are filled with the sound of gunfire.

At the Phalange headquarters, only a few feet from no-man's-land, a PLO sniper is outlined against a building pock-marked by chipped

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cement, bullet holes, and broken glass. The war, however, seems almost to fade away in the villa of Dr Charles Malik, where I am greeted by the strong voice of a man who looks younger than he is. We are seated in a lovely, lush garden, waited on by servants. Malik's petite wife sits quietly at his side as we sip coffee and whisky.

Malik, former Lebanon Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the US and the UN, is gracious and flattering in the traditional Lebanese manner. "I've read what you've been writing", he says, and I smile and nod my gratitude. I sense that Malik is used to deference, and so the conversation is a kind of exercise in the soft-spoken politeness which is so difficult for me. "Greetings from Abba Eban", I offer. Malik smiles. "Ah, Eban. Those metaphors. A man of imagery.... But I always had more metaphors than Eban."

It seems strange to be discussing phraseology and rhetoric even as one hears the mortars and artillery. The Israeli air force, navy and artillery continuously shell West Beirut; but we sit in Dr Malik's garden sipping our Turkish coffee as if down the hill it was only some big-screen drive-in war movie that was being featured.

"Tell me, the Americans, what do they want?", he asks as an opener. "Well", I suggest, "I think they are confused. Habib...." He interrupts, his voice full of silky contempt. "Habib, Habib, oh my God. He reminds me of some American Jew trying to make it into the Establishment. The more he tries to become an American, the more he remains a Jew.... The situation is that we Lebanese and you Jews, we have to do this together or we'll be at the mercy of the PLO and the Syrians. The PLO and the Syrians *must* get out."

"To the last Israeli soldier?", I ask.

He ignores me. "You know Begin", he said. "Send him a message. Tell him this is a golden opportunity for a new order in Lebanon. A Lebanese government, with the help of Israel. We have had everybody here since the Crusaders—and now we have Jewish rulers. But they don't want to rule."

"Just what is this Lebanese government?", I ask. Malik sighs. He is a Maronite Christian, at reluctant odds with the Moslems, and with very little faith in the current designated leaders. "What about Shafik Wazzan (the current Prime Minister)?", I ask. Malik turns up his hands and softly shakes his head. "Wazzan is a weak man.... Sarkis is a lightweight...."

Should I play the devil's advocate? I feel as if I am bringing a tempting snake into the garden. "Why don't you take over the government? You should be dealing with Habib." He shakes his head again. "There is a constitution...." His voice trails off, picks up again. "There are the elections."

"Well, one could always arrange a coup?" "No, no", he says, but not emphatically. Apparently, it's not the first time he has heard the suggestion. He still has great prestige, but here he sits in his villa, caught in the Catch-22 conundrum of Lebanese politics. "There are the Muslims. We have to deal with the Muslims, and there are so many difficulties there. All the Arab states, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia, are competing to have influence with each of the Muslim groups in Lebanon.... And we can't take any action until Syria and the PLO are gone. We cannot do anything so long as Arab states meddle in our affairs."

His voice became tinged with a world-weary melancholy as he intermittently sipped his Turkish coffee. He was giving me a lesson in the art (or artlessness) of Lebanese politics.

Then he smiled; we had run out the spool of time and talk, and we all stood to shake hands. During our whole chat his wife had sat quietly.

"Give my regards to Begin", he said. "He is a man of vision." I had to break into a genuine smile at that. Begin would probably agree with him, but surely not on the nature of the vision.

ONE OF FAHADI'S MEN picks me up. By this time it's 10 p.m., and he takes me on another hair-raising ride to a Phalange headquarters near the beach. The Phalange are housed in what looks like a huge barracks, oddly reminiscent of the old fort in *Beau Geste*. Soldiers are drilling, parading, singing. I don't know exactly why it seems like a film, but often it does, at the cinematic crossroads where East meets West. The soldiers all appear young. None of them sports a moustache (a detail which, I understand, comes about because the Christians want to be distinguished from the Muslims). I briefly meet and talk with Bahir Gemayel, young head of the Phalange, but on the eve of his Presidential candidacy he prefers not to be quoted for the record.

Finally, back to my quarters in the Hotel Alexander, where I have trouble sleeping, as usual: flares light up the night to the steady thump of falling shells.

In the morning, to the centre of the city for a visit with another venerable figure: Camille Chamoun, now 82 and retired, President of Lebanon from 1952 to 1958 (when President Eisenhower sent the US marines to Lebanon). He lives in a top-floor, attractively furnished apartment in a high-rise building, surrounded by sentries and sandbags. We eat small pieces of sweet chocolate. His voice is very gentle, unassuming. My impression is of a shrewd man, a veteran politician.

"Well, what do you think of Haig?", he asks. Secretary of State Haig had just resigned. "I don't think it's good for any of us", I suggest. "Time may be running out...." "Yes, yes", he says. "But the PLO and Syrians must be made to leave", he

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goes on, echoing other voices. It was a refrain running through all Christian conversation in Lebanon, like a haunting prayerful melody. "We must of the utmost necessity establish a coalition with the Muslims", he insists, harking back to the "old coalition" or "system" which existed among the various Christian and Muslim forces when Chamoun was President. He mixes new caution with his old, as if he were afraid of the rising power of the Gemayels. I try to disabuse him of his trust in a return to the old system.

"Mr President", I say, "I can't see the 'Lebanese pact' being re-established. It didn't work. It no longer exists. The government goes nowhere, it is nothing but a paper camel. . . ."

He remains silent for a while, as if carefully choosing his words. He makes complimentary but oddly disquieting comments about current political figures in Lebanon. I try again.

"Will there be a coup?"

"Nonsense, nonsense", he said, dismissing the idea. "We have a democratic system."

"What are you going to do when the Israelis leave?"

"Oh, I don't think Mr Sharon will leave quite so soon", he says with a little smile.

I recognise it, for I've seen it in other men who nurture ambition as if it were some secret reserve in the bank. He is not spent—somewhere, sometime, he is hoping that his hour will come again: he seems waiting to be called.

Back in the hotel, I sought to make new contacts. "I've got to get to see some Moslems," I say. The *Mossad* men are doubtful, but agree. The Moslem they take me to is none other than Walid Jumblatt, former supporter of the PLO who has now jettisoned his erstwhile allies, a self-styled Socialist with pretensions to kingship, a Druze who likes to rule.

The Druze village of Monsura is just outside Beirut, a small village dominated by two edifices, the large Druze church and Jumblatt's villa, a formidable place dominated by white arches.

Jumblatt walks in forcefully. He has thick, wild-growing black hair, fierce eyes; he's wearing white robes and is obviously used to being the centre of any situation. He begins without ceremony. The *Mossad* man who speaks perfect Arabic translates for me, although I can, for the most part, follow; but it's the way Jumblatt prefers it.

"Ah, the Jews", he begins. "They want to change the map of the Middle East. . . ." He never once uses the term "Israeli." It is always Jews, and it's a word uttered with no little audible hostility.

"Sir", I say, trying to keep the irritation out of my voice; "Did you not collaborate with the PLO? and have you not now betrayed them?" His eyes flash. "I never collaborated, I never betrayed", he says roughly. The *Mossad* man flashes a signal and says (in Hebrew), "Don't ask him that again. . . ."

Jumblatt is adamant about the PLO, and about the kind of pragmatism which dumps defeated allies. "They lost the war", he says. "They must go."

"But the Syrians and the Jews must go too", he adds. Everybody out. Two white-robed Druze elders walk in and sit next to Jumblatt, who engages them in conversation; they show deference and respect, and I assume it's Jumblatt's arranged way of showing his power. His people call him "the Prince", an odd name for "a man of the Left."

I gather that the conversation, such as it was, is over. He curtly says goodbye.

AN OLD BATTERED poster advertises "*The delights of Lebanon, day and night.*" That last evening I asked my driver, a Lebanese named Jack, to show me what there still was of the night life of Lebanon. "Is there a *dolce vita*?" Jack, about 20, born to an American mother (hence his accent), drove me to what he called "the best little old night-club in town." Once through the door one could be back in London or Washington, far from "Beirut by day."

It was a reasonable facsimile of a Paris discothèque. I imagine they were playing rock-and-roll, or "disco." As I was told once in a Western night-spot, I wouldn't know blues from blue-grass. Well, it wasn't Mozart. I was tired, and not a little disoriented. Jack brought over two women dressed in bright-blue mini-skirts, jewels around their long necks. "An Israeli", Nicole said, "And when are you going to kill the PLO?" I shrugged. "Hey, old man", she said, "do you know how to dance? I'll teach you!" And so we danced, ate kebab, drank whisky, until I had had enough. In the din of the disco, you could make out almost nothing of the outside world, except to glimpse through heavy curtains an occasional flare or sudden fiery flash. Perhaps it was just a passing Mercedes headlight.

There was something strange about that scene, and it wasn't just the contrast of a jet-set night-spot with the cold-night misery just outside, only a glazed window away in West Beirut.

Is this a land which has seen so many raiders and invaders that things will always "remain the same"? The violence breeds violence, in an unbroken chain of revanchism. The old man is still sitting there, pointing at the sky, trying to give names to nameless dangers. The refugees wear the same stolid expression as they shuffle on to yet another trek. The Druze leader continues pacing furiously, the old politicians sip their coffee, devising political combinations, scheming, hoping. Flares or lights go on and off, and Nicole, or someone like her, is dancing. Is it all like the cedars, unchanging, permanent?

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Laurence Lerner

Poussin to his Model

St Matthew did not write St Matthew's gospel,
An angel wrote it.
And here I am, sitting before the canvas,
Sitting and waiting.
You stand there, Dominique. You've brought your father?
Good. Sit him centre. Lean over him and whisper
In the right ear. No—stand up, take the book,
And point. And smile. And fold and lay your cloak
On that brown stone, to stain the world with truth.
The wide receptive river, the warm earth,
The sun like silent music—and the ruins:
Temples, vast ragged cylinders, torn stones,
The remnants of a dying world on which
To lay a sudden finger. Dominique
—Sorry, Domenico—try on this sheet,
Imagine that you're wearing wings; stand straight,
Let the white folds fall freer. Now dictate
"The birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David—"

No angel comes to me. I work it out.

Rome. After twenty years I am a stranger
Within this pagan world: the consonants
Worn smooth by time, the sun, the comic names,
Columns like broken teeth, abandoned tombs,
The self-sufficient landscape. . . .
Now, old man,
Sit here, look at the angel. What's your name?
Marco? Impossible. Well, sit and write.
Pretend you're writing, then. He will dictate
What will destroy your world—the only one
You and your ancestors have ever known,
The crumbling midden, earth. He will announce
How three wise men brought gold and frankincense
To worship the event that drove the gods
From off the earth. He will pronounce these words:
"The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise."
Bare sentences of stone surround us now
Our hopes are set on heaven. Here below
Out of the fragments painters recompose
Their version of a ruined paradise.

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LETTERS

Sontag in Poland

MELVIN LASKY's article on *Reds* in the August issue ends with a spatter of scorn for the usual target, the conveniently ill-defined "they" who keep hankering after revolutions.

> "They will, one fine day, perhaps be sadly disappointed, like Miss Susan Sontag, in General Jaruzelski's martial law, after presumably being so hopeful about the humanising renaissance of Polish society under Comrades Bierut or Gomulka or Gierek."

Presumably? As Mr Lasky should know perfectly well, I have never regarded the post-War, Communist governments of Poland with anything but contempt, dismay, and sorrow.

SUSAN SONTAG

New York

MELVIN LASKY's article in the August ENCOUNTER might lead his readers to think that Susan Sontag is one of those people who are "sadly disappointed. . . in Jaruzelski's martial law, after presumably being so hopeful about the humanising renaissance of Polish society under Comrades Bierut or Gomulka or Gierek."

That would be a false presumption about Miss Sontag—just how false is shown by the recent letter to the *New Republic* (26 May 1982) by the Polish critic and editor Jaroslaw Anders, a member of *Solidarity*, now in the US, who met her in Poland in the spring of 1980:

> "During our first conversation in Poland, long before the August strikes and the rise of Solidarity, the very sentence that shook New York in February 1982—'communism is successful fascism'—was uttered. I do not recall whether by her or by me. It is of no importance, since our agreement was immediate and total. I also witnessed her secret (for obvious reasons) meetings with Polish dissidents, and noticed no difference of opinion on the character of the communist regime.
>
> ". . . Sontag denounces communism and at the same time reprehends the present American Administration. Sontag does a dangerous thing: she reminds us that political questions may be, and should be addressed on a moral, that is a particular, rather than an ideological level. This is bound to produce the inevitable question: 'who is more evil, they or we?' A question easy to answer, and thousands of people from the East, like me, did it without hesitation. So did Sontag. I heard her saying in Poland, more than once, that American society is infinitely better, more liberal, historically more promising than anything that communism ever produced in any part of the world."

ROBERT SILVERS

New York Review of Books

I WOULD BE very pleased to accept Ms Susan Sontag's profession of her "contempt, dismay, and sorrow" at all the post-War Communist governments of Poland. But she must understand why some of her loyal readers were not so convinced that she "never regarded" them in any other light. She herself, in her much-quoted Town Hall speech in February, confessed that "people on the left have willingly or unwillingly told a lot of lies. We were unwilling to identify ourselves as anti-Communists. . . ." She herself reports that she could not bring herself to accept Czeslaw Milosz's analysis of Polish Communism, dismissing his book *The Captive Mind* (1953) as "an instrument of cold war propaganda." And, finally, she went on to tell us candidly that "many of us, and I include myself, did not understand the nature of the Communist tyranny. We tried to distinguish among Communisms. . . ." Presumably (if I may venture another tentative presumption) she has in the intervening years radically, if slowly, changed her mind about her flirtation with what she once chastely called "a promiscuous idea of revolution."

In this light it is difficult to understand Ms Sontag's reference to my "spatter of scorn for the usual target, the conveniently ill-defined 'they' who keep hankering after revolution." I thought it was quite clear who belonged within the definition, for had she herself not hankered after the revolution in Cuba, the revolution in Hanoi, and ultimately indeed a revolution in America? In her Town Hall speech she admitted some intellectual guilt for "treating 'Stalinism', which we disavowed, as if it were an aberration, and praising other regimes, outside of Europe, which had and have essentially the same character." She must not, as I say, blame her careful readers for paying attention to what she has been saying over the years. At the end of her *Trip to Hanoi* (1968) she penned a paean of praise to her "new feelings" and concluded:

> "Someone who enjoyed new feelings of that kind . . . is never the same again. In him [i.e. her], the 'revolution' has just started, and it continues. So I discover that what happened to me in North Vietnam did not end with my return to America, but is still going on."

Presumably it has now stopped. Good for her (if bad for the "revolution").

AS FOR Robert Silvers' gallant rallying to her defence, it is more generous than convincing. I am delighted that she left a favourable impression on a member of Polish *Solidarity* (indeed more than that: gave him moral and political encouragement). I have no reason to doubt that he "heard her saying in Poland, more than once, that American society is infinitely better, more liberal, historically more promising, etc. etc. . . ." If this is what she believes today, and the editor of the *New York Review of Books* must know, then my reference to the surprising and dramatic pattern of high hopes and sad disappointment in what she used to call "styles of radical will" is even more apt. She was once plugging quite a different line. In her essay on "What's Happening in America" (1966), published in her collection called *Styles of Radical Will*, she wrote:

> "America was founded on a genocide . . . . it's the whole character structure of modern American man, and his imitators, that needs rehauling. . . . The truth is that Mozart, Pascal, Boolean algebra, Shakespeare, parliamentary government, baroque churches, Newton, the emancipation of women, Kant, Marx, and Balanchine ballets don't redeem what this particular civilization has wrought upon the world. The white

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race *is* the cancer of human history. . . . This is a doomed country, it seems to me; I only pray that, when America founders, it doesn't drag the rest of the planet down."

Presumably she no longer believes this. If so, my own little modest prayer would be to have, at long last, a full account from her of the Style that Failed, or how radical will went wrong. Needless to say, we would be pleased to publish it.

MELVIN J. LASKY

Bondy's "Conspiracy"

IT WAS important—and certainly rarely emphasised in the (mostly) superficial newspaper reporting of the day—that François Bondy, in his comments on the Italian Terrorist trial [ENCOUNTER, August], emphasised the grotesque element of conspiratorial suspicions. Not the murderers are guilty but mysterious strangers, foreigners, international agents. It is, to be sure, not a particularly "Italian" trait; for we have had it in almost every dramatic case from the Kennedy assassination in Dallas (not Oswald but Havana, or Moscow, or the Mafia, was responsible) to a whole host of scandals in Western Europe. But the thesis of Italian innocence—it is never our fault if we lose wars, or collapse economically (President Nixon, after all, hated the lira)—can always be counted upon to emerge.

The Moro trial, as Bondy pointed out, has been almost overshadowed by the testimony of the Moro family—the widow Eleonora, and her son and daughter, Giovanni and Agnese. What a cliff-hanging thriller emerged! We can hardly wait for the resumption of the trial (in the autumn) to see whether any evidence will ever be presented to back up the sensational allegations. Apparently "the Americans" are heavily involved. They were opposed to Aldo Moro's efforts to get Berlinguer's Communist Party into the Christian Democratic government, so they warned Moro to cease and desist, and even (if we are to believe Eleonora Moro) to withdraw from politics. Consequently the Christian Democrats did all they could to sabotage the efforts to find and liberate the kidnapped Prime Minister.

Even "the Swiss" are supposed to have been deep into the conspiracy. Was it true that the Geneva lawyer Payot, who was a go-between in the similarly tragic Schleyer kidnapping in Germany, was warned to stay out of the case? Mysterious Swiss authorities are also supposed to have put pressure on the International Red Cross to leave things alone. (The Swiss have, to be sure, denied this vigorously; but they would, wouldn't they?)

The correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reported the absurd impression in Milan that, not the Red Brigades, but the Christian Democrats did away with Moro, on "instructions from abroad." As he writes (*NZZ*, 24-25 July, p. 3) ". . . no proofs have yet been offered for the thesis of a plot and counterplot. But the penchant for conspiracy theories is very deeply rooted in Italy."

After all, there must still be millions of people who believe that not Giangacomo Feltrinelli was responsible for blowing himself up with a bomb on a Milan pylon, but "certain sinister strangers." Watch out for them—they are still on the prowl.

But the *real* strangers and conspirators among them are welcomed! The Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, Spadolini, embraces in Rome Yasser Arafat, whose PLO forces had trained the Red Brigade terrorists who went on to murder his predecessor, Aldo Moro. Double standards rule!

LUIGI MARTINI

Lugano

"Secrets" of Hume & Madison?

IT WILL BE unfortunate if Theodore Draper's exposé of "the secrets" of James Madison's *Federalist* paper No. 10 [ENCOUNTER, February] stands unchallenged. Essay No. 10 contains no secrets. Draper is properly sceptical about Douglas Adair's "discovery" that David Hume inspired it, but the claim that Hamilton was the source of Madison's argument favouring an "extended" republic is really quite astonishing. Their differences over this issue were fundamental and articulated most explicitly.

As I have pointed out elsewhere (November 1974, *The Journal of Politics*), Madison's tenth paper was a preliminary statement of two of the main ideas which he developed in subsequent papers and repeated until the end of his life. The American Republic is unique because it is representative rather than participatory, and federal rather than unitary. Its representative institutions rest on the supposition that liberty is essential to political life; so that, given human nature, opinions about every conceivable subject are inevitably diverse. Not even the introduction of political equality converts the natural heterogeneity of opinions and interests into a homogeneous mass. Moreover, extend the "sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests" than is likely to be found in small constituencies. Nevertheless, it is the "form of government" which determines the ease with which opinions and interests are aggregated into self-interested governing majorities. Federalism tends to confine the latter to the states and to ensure that representatives in Congress will be constrained to respond to a broader range of interests than their counterparts in the state legislatures. This result is probable because the limited number of members in Congress must be chosen from relatively fewer and larger districts than in the states. In addition, it can be expected that eventually sharp differences in the social and economic structure found among the states will tend to disappear. Given these factors, members of the House will have a "diffusive sympathy with the whole of society" (Nos. 56 and 58). The House, therefore, is more likely to be independent of corrupt executive influence of the sort practised by Walpole on Parliament (No. 55).

Six months after publishing the tenth essay, Madison made his point very clear in a letter to George Nicholas, (a delegate to the Virginia ratifying convention). The "structure of the House of Reps." will secure members taken "more diffusively from each State than the members of Congs. have generally been." The unicameral Confederation Congress consisted of persons chosen by the legislatures "in most states from commercial and maritime situations which have generally presented the best of choice of characters." In the new Congress, however, the House must consist of "a majority of inland & Western members . . . a difference of some moment in my opinion" (*Papers*, vol. 11, pp. 48–49). It

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was of no less significance to Madison that the Senate would probably continue to be composed of members drawn chiefly from the commercial and mercantile interests in the Northern states which were initially given a clear numerical preponderance over the Southern in the distribution of votes.

DRAPER'S CHOICE of Hamilton over Hume as the secret source of No. 10 can be disposed of easily. Madison owed no intellectual debt to either man for his argument in this essay. As he reported to Jefferson nearly a month before No. 10 was published, the Framers were guided by the histories of some ancient and modern confederacies and "still more to the purpose is our own experience both during the war and since the peace." Consequently, the true principles of republican government can be understood only by proving, "in contradiction to the concurrent opinions of theoretical writers", that this form of government must operate within an "extensive sphere" (*Papers*, vol. 10, pp. 210, 212). Subsequently, in essay No. 14 he accused two theoretical writers, one a citizen of a limited monarchy and the other a subject of absolute monarchy, of seeking to sway opinion against republicanism and in favour of limited monarchy. The fair inference is that he referred to Hume and Montesquieu. The former was an unequivocal anti-republican and an ardent supporter of the form of monarchy wrought by Walpole. Madison once dismissed Montesquieu's admiration of the British executive because it bordered on "idolatry" (*Writings*, vol. VI, p. 614). Essay No. 14 ended on a clear call to accept American experience rather than theoretical or historical models as the basis for believing that the American experiment in republicanism would succeed and endure.

HAMILTON provided even less support for Madison's explanation of the effects of extending the sphere. At the Constitutional Convention Hamilton strongly denounced republican government for three main reasons, one of which (according to Robert Yates' notes) was that there would be no inducement to "gentlemen of fortune and abilities" to provide "a [good] representation from so extensive a continent." Power will be placed in the hands of "the demagogue or middling politician." Men of "real weight and fortune" will stay at home and strengthen the state governments. Yates' record of Hamilton's position corroborates Madison's. According to the latter, Hamilton opposed republican government because of "the extent of the Country to be governed" and the continued existence of the states. The serious difficulty is that of "drawing representatives from the extremes to the center of the Community." The House will be "bait to little demagogues" and the Senate will be filled with "undertakers", unless senators are given life tenure.

This prophecy of the low quality of Congress's members led Hamilton to "despair that a Republican Govt. could be established over so great an extent" (Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, vol. 1, pp. 287–88 and 298–99). Hamilton's rejection of an extended republic led Madison to argue in essay No. 14 that the natural limit of a republic is "that distance from the center which will barely allow representatives to meet as often as may be necessary" to conduct public affairs. Finally, Hamilton not only explicitly doubted Madison's theory of the moderating effects of large spheres on representatives, but also prophesied that the contest for control of the new government would be between "landed men and merchants" (No. 60).

TO CONCLUDE THAT Draper's treatment of this subject is groundless is not to claim that Hume had no influence whatsoever on Madison and his contemporaries. As I have argued recently (September 1981, *The American Political Science Review*), Hume's essay, "Of the First Principles of Government" provided a major focal point of difference between Federalists and Republicans. Other essays were of great importance simply because Hume, more than any writer of his time, I believe, expounded political and economic theories which linked the development of the British Cabinet with the pursuit of national greatness through imperial conquest and the growth of capitalism, manufacturing and commerce with the decline of the importance of land as the basis of power.

Because Hume's comments on these phenomena were based on British *experience*, they were of prime interest to the American Founders. After all, they sought to found a novel yet stable republic at a time of profound changes.

ROBERT J. MORGAN

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

THE DIFFICULTY of Professor Robert J. Morgan with my article is based on a clear and distinct misreading. It would have been "astonishing" if I said that "Hamilton was the source of Madison's argument favouring an 'extended' republic." Professor Morgan later repeats the same offence, when he has me choosing "Hamilton over Hume as the secret source of No. 10."

No such thing. I merely pointed out that Hamilton was no stranger to Madison's main point, that "Hamilton's No. 9 meshes with Madison's No. 10", that the theme of "the decreased danger of factions in a large republic—was as familiar to Hamilton as to Madison." All this is very different from the idea that "Hamilton was the source." Nowhere does Professor Morgan come to grips with what Hamilton wrote in No. 9 or, even more explicitly, in No. 27, cited by me at some length.

How could I have made Hamilton the "source" or "secret source", when I also wrote that "both Madison and Hamilton were quite capable of independently making their own adaptations and orchestrations of the Humean theme"? I limited myself to what Madison and Hamilton wrote in *The Federalist*. Whether Madison and Hamilton were consistent throughout their lives is something else. The rest of Professor Morgan's letter is unnecessary exegesis. I repeat that his main charge—that I made Hamilton the "source" of Madison's argument for the "extended republic"—is based on misapprehension.

THEODORE DRAPER

Princeton, New Jersey

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Life & Letters Today

London

HYPE, HYPE, HOORAY: **At long last the American love affair with journalists appears to be over. It was never a good thing, either for the Americans or for the journalists. After all the Watergate hack worship the American film industry has now produced "Absence of Malice", which takes the healthier view that reporters are a pack of bums and disturb the peace of innocent people. Perhaps to counterbalance this, *Time* magazine has produced an advertisement for itself that is so over the top I shall quote it in full [Stephen Pile writes].**

***Time* claims its journalists "report, discover, interview, warn, praise, evaluate, weigh, research, chart, authenticate, graph, judge, celebrate, perceive, forecast, ponder, investigate, search, refine, appraise, calculate, unravel, dissect, probe, analyse, check, background, profile, assess, explain, determine, double check, source, illustrate, scan, demystify, clarify, examine, scrutinise, uncover, admonish, asseverate, astonish, confirm, edit, publish."**

Hype, hype, hooray.

SUNDAY TIMES

Albany, N.Y.

PAPER TIGERS: *Imagine Samson shorn of his locks, or a fish out of water—that sort of thing—and you have the recent plight of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The DEC is the bureaucracy that ran out of paper.*

Remedies were found, but it caused mutterings of astonishment in the world of public affairs. The agency failed to submit its briefs on time in an application for a utility to convert a plant to coal.

"Please be advised," counsel wrote to the judge, "that severe production problems within our department, including lack of paper for printing, precludes our submitting the brief".

Help rushed a truck to the DEC offices in Albany, N.Y., with 5,000 sheets of paper for the agency to print its brief.

The DEC stiffly declined the gift. "We're not in the business of using other people's paper. We have our own paper. From time to time, supplies can't keep up with demand."

The judge granted a three-day postponement—"in view of the rather unique situation of a state agency running out of paper."

WALL STREET JOURNAL

Berlin

QUOTE UNQUOTE: *Political observers here are turning into quotation-watchers. In a recent number of the "Einheit", the official theoretical organ of the East German Communist party, every single article published therein began either with a citation from Chairman Brezhnev or the local Prime Minister, Erich Honecker. Was it significant that in the next issue there were some 49 quotes from Honecker but only two from Brezhnev and those only in footnotes? It was astonishing. Even a Minister named Mittag was cited eight times, or just half of the 16 Lenin quotations (as compared to six of Marx and five of Engels). At the moment it is hard to puzzle out why Comrade B. is not consistently at the top of the league table. Do they know something we do not?*

DIE WELT *(Bonn)*

Paris

FRANGLAIS: *The French are maintaining their high standards of translations designed to amuse the tourists. Stickers on the lavatories at the Hôtels des Falaises, Gluges, in the Dordogne read: "This wash is fit out with vacuum cleaner to propel, its advise urgently do not throw absorbents cottons, periodicals, papers, toilet-papers, tissue handerkerchiefs, what risks to tight organs on the move suppressing the guarantee."*

Any more constipated English which might come as light relief for the holiday period?

THE TIMES

London

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: **American "Preppies" are still heavily into nicknames, which the English abandoned after the War. In fact, the most frequently used Preppy nicknames listed—"Chip . . . Skip . . . Topsy . . . Muffy" and so on—sound more like the top ten most popular names for the English mongrel.**

While I was last in America 10 years ago [Jilly Cooper writes], I was lunching in someone's house when the puppy peed on the carpet. "Daddy, daddy", screamed the youngest child, "Donna's going to the bathroom in the living room!" It convinced me, not for the first time, that American was fast becoming a foreign language.

DAILY MAIL

Edinburgh

ROCKY SCOTCH: **It is a continual source of annoyance to Scotsmen that the English use the terms "English" and "British" interchangeably. Not only is this somewhat insulting to the Scots, but can lead to serious confusions of meaning.**

Obviously it is annoying to see such terms as "English Government," "English Embassy" used, post 1707. It is equally annoying to see "British" where "English" is the appropriate term, as in the article on the Old Bailey. McKenzie's quoted statement (fancy! a McKenzie!) is wrong. "It also hears all the major cases from anywhere in Britain which, because of their supreme importance or because of adverse local conditions, merit being tried in London."

In fact, it only hears cases from England and Wales as surely any lawyer could have pointed out. The Scottish legal system is quite different, and no Scottish case would ever go to the Central Criminal Court.

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